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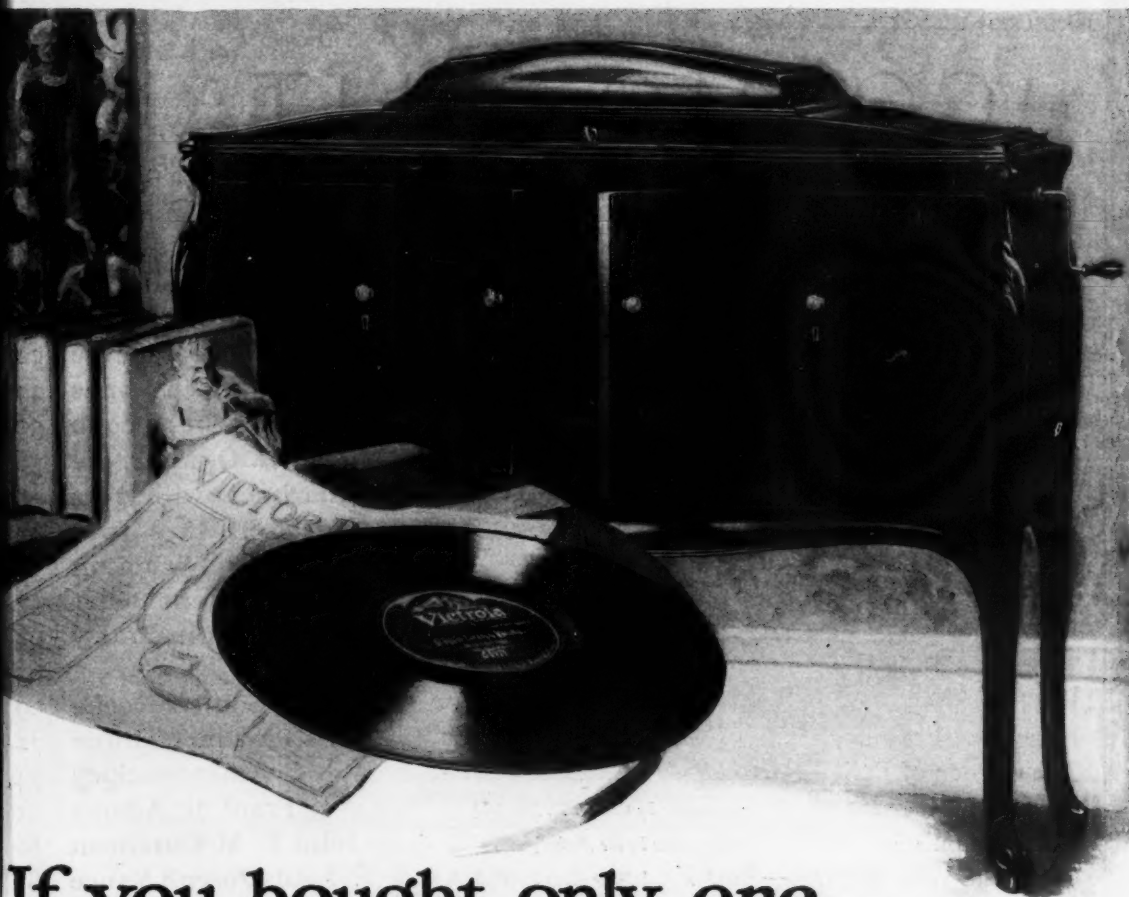
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Irish Stories by Kathleen Norris





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America's Greatest Magazine

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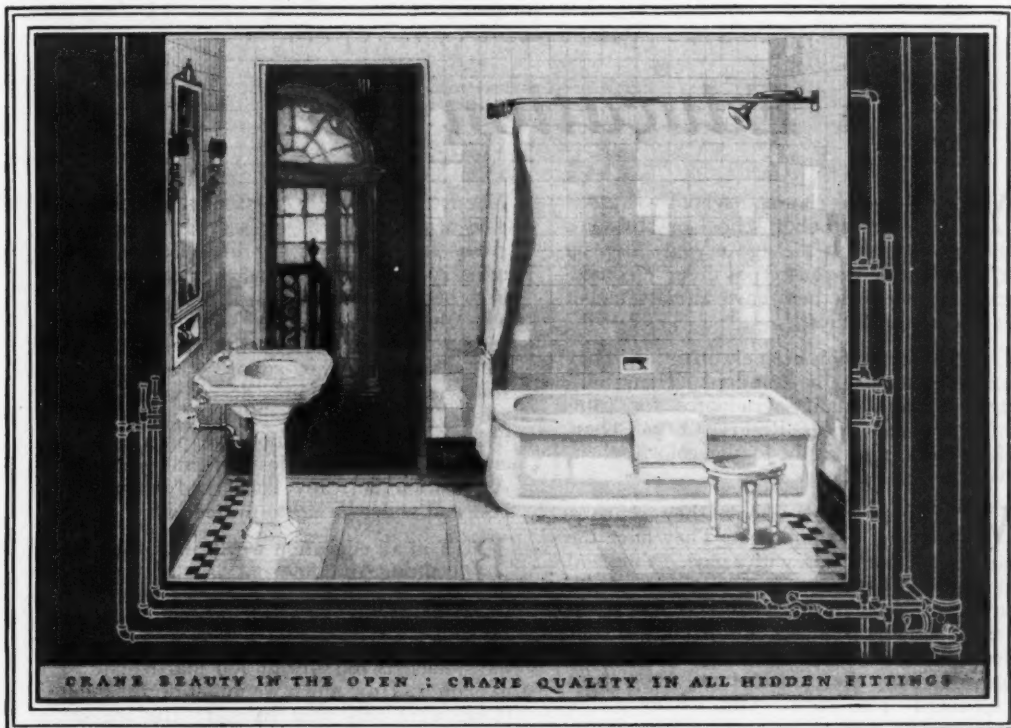
Never The Twain Shall Meet

A Novel by PETER B. KYNE

With illustrations by DEAN CORNWELL

You know what a treat that means

Published monthly by the International Magazine Company at 119 West 40th Street, New York, N. Y., U. S. A.
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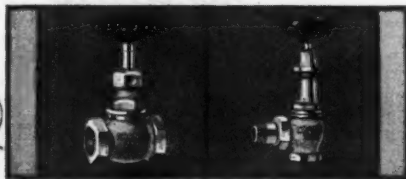
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Education Plus

YEARS ago to choose a school was easy. It was either public school or Hobson's choice. Now with the age crying "step on it," schools of various types deserve consideration. Most of them have already had it in our earlier issues.

The military schools are next in order. They count up toward the hundred. Their military features qualify graduates for commission in the Officers Reserve Corps. They, like others, must rally to the colors whenever they are called.

WITH all good schools they share a common denominator. They have the same academic ideals, with a plus,—a method to develop thoroughness, orderliness, regularity, reliability, cheerfulness, self-confidence, willing obedience, and in consequence the power to command. The voluntary they convert into the involuntary, they turn haphazard into habit. Out of even the unpromising they make genuine Americans.

The military school is American. It is as truly of our soil as ever Lincoln was. It is an outgrowth of conditions here. Europe cannot match it. Our best private schools hark back to English models. Many colleges like to talk of Oxford and of Cambridge. A while ago our universities were importing German Ph.Ds., along with German methods.

PREPARING boys for college, military schools bring them to their best in body, mind and soul. The physical they regard as sacramental. Upbuilding a sound body in which the mind and soul may live they confirm the line:

*"Nor soul helps flesh, now,
more than flesh helps soul."*

Young men escape the vagaries and upheavals of adolescence through a daily care which steadies the nerves, toughens the fibre, and establishes an equilibrium nothing ever shakes.

Nor is there in their classrooms any chance. The academic "will be served." Men get ready for college or for life. Between the military and non-military, no cleavage is or is to be. Both do work worth while. Those who think that military schools are mere reformatories would better think again. Those sure that they suppress individuality follow stars that light a desert way. Those suspicious lest our military schools may trifle with true education are playing hide and seek with actualities at a time when the Association is really concerned about the best and endeavoring to provide it.

BUT in all education worth the while, the training of the soul is the supreme purpose. Young people haunt us with their vague yearnings to be understood. Each has his own problem and to him it seems peculiar. Each is too shy or too inarticulate to explain it. How much we might do for them if we were only wise enough! But we are so busy playing the great game for money, power and fame, that most of us have lost our soul. Yet it is the soul young people want of us, the best we have for them.

The Association pledges every boy the soul of the good schools. In them the way is open into church. Conformity to convention is the normal course. Starting something new for the mere sake of change, boys never learn in them. One thing every boy is sure to learn,—when duty calls, in peace or war, to fight for home, for country, and for God. Such training, always democratic, adds the power to lead. One day in consequence we shall have a crop of leaders who will never know when they are beaten on any field of human service:

*"Fight on, my men, says Sir
Andrew Barton,
I am hurt, but I am not slaine;
I'll lie me down and bleed a-while,
And then I'll rise and fight againe."*

Lyman J. Powell

Director, Cosmopolitan Educational Department
119 West Fortieth Street, New York, N. Y.

The Law and the Prophets

by S. E. KISER

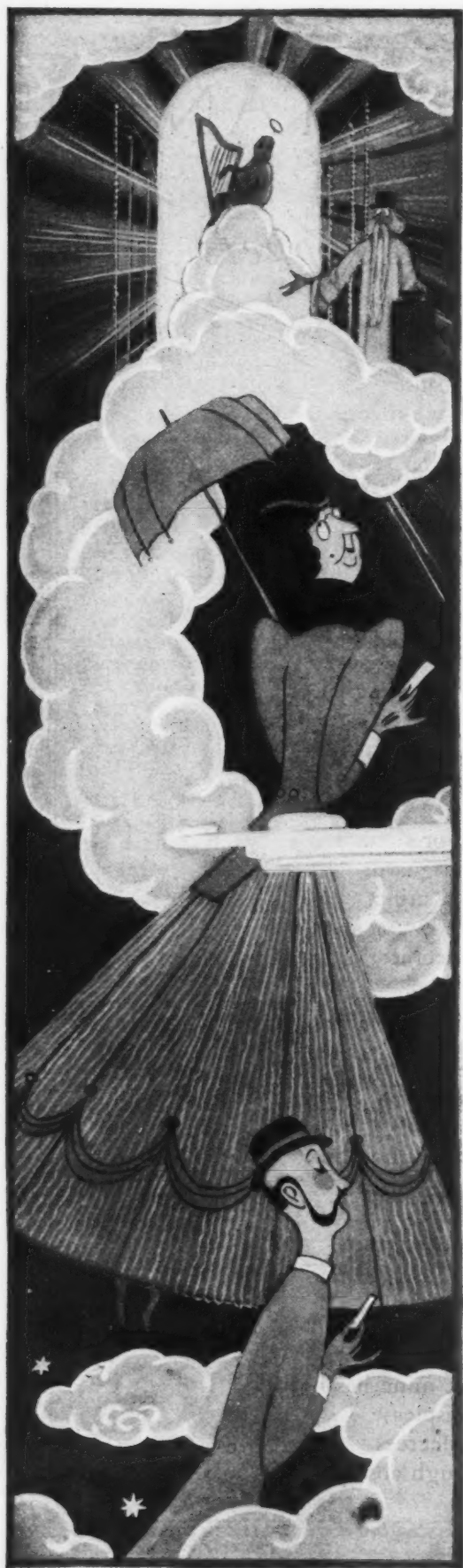
I MAY not tell you how you cause
 The day to brighten when we meet;
 I must obey the man-made laws
 That bid me to remain discreet;
 I have no right to let you guess
 That I observe your loveliness,
 For Fate's a tyrant, Chance a cheat.

BECAUSE, one day, you stood before
 A preacher who, perhaps, was old
 And far past loving any more,
 My love for you must not be told;
 I must be careful to impart
 No word that might delight your heart,
 My look must be reserved and cold.

AND you must not, by word or sign,
 Disclose the secret that you guard;
 The joy that might be yours and mine,
 Remember, is forever barred,
 For this, they say, is Heaven's decree:
 What's done is done, and was to be!
 The sacred scroll must not be marred.

WE might rebel, and ask them how,
 If Heaven directs and sanctifies,
 Our ways diverged so far till now,
 And why, when bound by irksome ties,
 We are allowed to meet, too late—
 Why, after we are tricked by Fate,
 We both may see, with opened eyes.

AH, but I must not touch your hand
 Nor speak the sweet, forbidden word;
 I must not let you understand
 When your heart calls that mine has heard;
 Our souls must starve, lest we displease
 Those who interpret Heaven's decrees
 And think them holy, though absurd.



The AMAZING of Lazy Men *Who* *By* GEORGE

LET us now turn our attention to the refrainers. Meaning that vast total of well meaning neighbors who believe that virtue consists of side-stepping and ducking.

They are the ones who have caused icicles to form above the portals of many a church. Why? Because their manner tells us that the consolations of religion are intended only for people already saved.

If you could read the mind of a first class refrainer, you might discover that his declaration of faith ran about as follows:

"I do not cuss and swear. I do not play poker for money. I do not have liquor in the house. I do not stay away from church unless I have a cold in the head. I do not joy-ride, or encourage all night dancing, or tell blue stories, or shoot craps. Therefore my ticket to Heaven is punched along the margin and stamped on the back and my salvation is a cinch."

He is sincere. The refrainers, as a class, believe that they are going to be rewarded and live in the midst of light and music throughout eternity, while the non-refrainers are going to lie on hot griddles and keep ringing for ice water that never comes.

Each day the refrainers are puzzled and shocked to observe that profane poker players who crave cocktails and have no sectarian affiliations are popular in their home towns, beloved by their associates, honored by the Rotarians — even elected to office.

So the refrainers decide that humanity is on the down grade and headed for the smoke pits. They feel that vice is being publicly endorsed because persons who have cultivated a few well known vices are greeted with smiles and handshakes, while prominent refrainers walk alone under the weeping willows.

Of course they are wrong. Poker players would not vote to legalize gambling. Our most proficient blasphemers punish the children for repeating bad

POPULARITY DRINK *and* LIE ADE

Illustrations by
Rea Irvin

words learned in the alley. A very recent marvel has been the upholding of the Eighteenth Amendment, verbally, by thousands of persons who are not offended by an invitation to drink.

Minor commandments may be violated in a wholesale manner, but the violations are never approved by formal vote.

Frailties and lapses are quite generally tolerated because they seem to be the trade-marks of our common brotherhood.

"Lightnin' Bill" Jones and Rip Van Winkle have been the most popular stage characters of the last half-century. Both of them were lazy drinking men who neglected their families, lied to their wives and invented lame excuses for their own moral delinquencies. They have been beloved because they were gentle, charitable, sincere and sympathetic—always pulling to make someone else happy.

Robin Hood is still approved by the public, even if he did steal from the rich to give to the poor. He is not applauded because he stole but because he showered his yellow pieces where they would do the most good.

The refrainers can get some wonderful tips from Lightnin' and Rip and Robin. They need not hide their bottles, or become loafers or hold up travelers on the highway, but they might arise each morning all tuned up to make existence a little less annoying to all within reach.

The idea is to lay *on* instead of merely laying *off*!

This is no slam at the churches but merely a brief clinic on a minority of church members known as refrainers. If they will get in line with the progressive majority and learn that the new religion includes basket ball, playgrounds, flower gardens, orchestral music, nurses for the sick, work for the unemployed, charity for those who stub their toes, "Welcome" instead of "Verboten" on every signboard—they may, in time, become just as popular as their wickedest neighbors.



KATHLEEN NORRIS
takes great pleasure in inviting you to meet

THE MURPHYS OF MAYO
and their friends, including

MA
CALLAHAN



Lizzie-Kate

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACC

S
et
o
g
C
These Lovable Folks are all Present at

Ellen's Luncheon

Illustrations by
James Montgomery Flagg



Ellen

"I KIND of think I let you in for something, Lizzie-Kate," Ellen Murphy said dubiously.

Her sister, wringing with lean, brown, toil-marked young hands an incredible number of steaming squares of heavy cotton, smiled gallantly over her "set tubs."

"Well, I don't suppose it'll kill me to have two or three ladies come in for lunch," she said reassuringly. "Mama'll come over and help with the children—"

"Here's the way it was," Ellen interrupted eagerly, as her sister paused.

Ellen worked in the office of Beatty & Bird in New York, and made the nine mile trip every day from the shabby suburb where she and her sister lived.

"It's Miss Brice, you know," she said. "She's head of the mail order department, and Miss Carter—Isabelle Carter, who is the president's confidential secretary, and Miss Carter's sister, she's with Boller and Company, and one other—a friend of Miss Brice's—that's four. And you see they have to come down here to that Chase wedding, we're all asked at half-past two, and there's no train between the eleven o'clock and the two o'clock. Miss Brice was talking to Miss Carter about it in our office, and Miss Carter asked me if there was a decent restaurant down here where they could get their lunch. Well, you know—"

Ellen interrupted herself eloquently. Then she went on:

"There's the Eyetalian place, where they smear tomato sauce on everything from the waffles to the ice cream, and there's the bakery, with that lemon pie in the window that Mart says looks as if the hand of death was on it, and those rolls with the fly specks—"

"Oh, it's terrible!" conceded Lizzie-Kate, in another pause. "You'd wonder they wouldn't have a good hotel down here, or a restaurant anyway," she mused, her wringing now finished. She began to stretch the squares with hard flaps, holding them by the corners.

"God in His Goodness be good to us all!" she ejaculated under her breath, dropping upon her knees before her first-born,



Flurry, who was staggering about the kitchen with a tin cart at his dragged little heels. "Open your mouth—" directed Lizzie-Kate sternly, exploring with an expert finger. "You bad, wicked boy, you!" she said, wiping his tear-streaming face with a corner of her apron, and rising to pursue instantly her employment and her conversation unruffled. "I wouldn't have to have much lunch for them," she said, of the wedding guests. "Some ham and some cake—and tea—"

"Oh, that'd be oceans!" Ellen assured her. "Maybe mama would make us her maple marshmallow cake," she added, with a rising inflection. For Mrs. Murphy's touch, with this delicacy, was unexcelled.

This question was presently answered in the affirmative by the lachrymose Mrs. Murphy herself, whose dingy weeds and spotted, colorless face now made their appearance at the kitchen door. Lizzie-Kate and her husband Joe Kane lived several blocks from her mother's shanty, and Ellen lived with them because it was nearer the trains. She had to report that she had stopped at Kate Oliver's, and that Bernadette looked as if she was sickening for something, and that she had met Minnie Cullinan, who said Ag was three months along.

Ellen and Lizzie-Kate kissed their mother affectionately, and Flurry was persuaded, under bribery, to submit his loose, soft, cool baby lips to her hard old ones.

"Minnie say anything about being engaged to Harry Casey?" Ellen asked, interested in the love affair.

"Aggie three months along again—my God!" Lizzie-Kate mused, interested in another young mother's problem.

"Poor girl!" her mother said, sighing. "Here she is with a man that'd pick a quarrel with his own guardian angel if he could see him, and another young one coming! You'd wonder a girl like Minnie Cullinan wouldn't have the good sense to keep out of getting married!" she finished darkly, with a significant glance in the direction of Ellen, whose preference for Mr. Clement A. Riordan was just now giving her mother and sisters some concern.

"Maybe I'm the kind that would never have a young one!" Ellen said shamelessly and blithely. "I was reading Immelda's history with her, the night I stayed at Jule's," she added, "and it seems there was a queen—and mind you, she was everlastingly getting up an excitement—but she never had any child at all—"

"Maybe she was one of them Produstunts—you couldn't expect much blessing on them!" Mrs. Murphy interpolated, with passing interest.

"She was a good Catholic," countered Ellen.

"Oh, well! then it was a trile God sent her," Mrs. Murphy decided contentedly. "And God only knows what He'll send *you*, Ellen," she added warningly to her latest born, "if you talk so free about what's none of your business, an unmarried girl like you! Me own cousin Jule Daly—that I named your sister for—wasn't she married a year, and took sick and all—and she says 'I don't know what's

the matter with me!" and the child screech-
in' in the room——"

Even the sober Lizzie-Kate's handsome young face twitched into an incredulous smile at this, and Ellen laid her mahogany head upon the table and laughed silently but frankly. Mrs. Murphy glanced from one to the other with slit-like, faded old eyes full of bewilderment and suspicion.

"Very good," she said, "go your ways—
and make a mock of your mother——"

She entered upon an embittered silence, when both Lizzie-Kate and Ellen, repentant, appeased and caressed her. Ellen presently introduced the subject of the luncheon, and the maple nut marshmallow cake.

Mrs. Murphy received the suggestion unenthusiastically; she pursed her mouth, widened her eyes and began to blink rapidly. Her gaze was fixed on space.

"You could make it, couldn't you, mom?" coaxed Ellen.

Her mother sighed.

"Well, I suppose I could, if I could get the eggs off Daisy Lennon," she admitted. "Me stove's gone back on me," added Mrs. Murphy pathetically. "Didn't I try to make Mart a custard last night, and the whole of it as pale as milk, with soot on it? I had the man there cleaning the best of the morning."

"Dear, dear!" Lizzie-Kate murmured sympathetically, removing Flurry's churning fists from the lard tin. "Well, if you can't bake, mama," she said comfortingly, "I'll make some of my walnut drop cookies. Joe's always glad when I get round to them."

Mrs. Murphy sniffed wetly.

"I don't know why you wouldn't rather have my cake than yours, Lizzie-Kate," she said disconsolately. "I don't know what's come over the ger'ls nowadays," she went on perversely, "the way they'd set invited company down to a lot of cookies—that you'd give children anny day of the week, and they coming home with their schoolbooks from school! Why don't you buy them a ham sandridge off the delicatessen, the way the Polacks do, and call that their lunch?" she demanded scornfully.

"What else would you have, mama?" Lizzie-Kate diverged diplomatically. She was expert in handling her pessimistic mother, or indeed anyone else in her group. Lizzie-Kate was thirty-two; her environment and education had always been of the plainest; she was a trifle too freckled, too pale and too worn for beauty.

She had stepped to the bedroom to get the baby, and had returned, and was seated, with the delicious, damp, wakeful, ringlet-crowned little lump of humanity that was Joe Kane, Junior, in her arms. Everything about her, especially now, when his fat fist beat her flat breasts, and her big, lean figure was bent about the baby, expressed the humble service of poverty and love. Lizzie-Kate would never see her name in print, would live and die, perhaps, in this cheap, two story wooden house; but the older women of her circle said that she was one of God's saints.

Lizzie-Kate had kept peace and harmony between her brothers and sisters years ago, between her dismal mother and her noisy, gay, intemperate father, between the neighbors. She loaned Ellen her new umbrella, and gave Joe the entire tenderloin, and got up noiselessly in the cold nights to give Flurry his cough medicine, and rejoiced and exulted the while as if these were rare privileges.

Her first thought upon hearing of any trouble, however remote from the sphere of her own responsibility, was eagerness to take her share of it—more than her share. "I'll take the children—I'll go in and set with her—I'll send over some soup——" said Lizzie-Kate. And when her husband or mother



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACE

"I'd hate to have mama slaving for my friends, but if you

occasionally suggested that with two roistering babies and a family of five to cook and sweep and wash and slave for, she was already sufficiently employed, Lizzie-Kate was almost shocked by their consideration.

"You'll have me spoiled—the lot of you!" she said.

The family took her for granted. Mrs. Murphy knew now that Lizzie-Kate would presently ask her to come over, on the day before the luncheon, and make the famous cake in Lizzie-Kate's own fine new stove.

Ellen knew that Lizzie-Kate would somehow dispose of the babies, and have the house sweet and quiet, and give her friends a delightful meal.

Mrs. Callahan, who presently came in with her big handsome face flushed from the early summer heat and rings of sloe-black hair plastered upon her forehead under her bonnet, was sure of Lizzie-Kate, too. She wanted Lizzie-Kate to suggest some "talent" for an approaching fair, and Lizzie-Kate was full of suggestions and ideas. This settled, Mrs. Callahan was interested in the luncheon party.



think it isn't too much——" said Ellen. "I don't think it would do her no hurt," said Mrs. Callahan.

"Why don't you let me come over and fry you some chickens?" she asked. "There's nothing in the world I'd like better. It's Saturday, is it? And Mary's taking all the children into town, for shoes."

"I was thinkin' I'd run in and stuff some potatoes—it's very monotonous for me now, what with Mart away all day," Mrs. Murphy added.

"All of you come!" Lizzie-Kate said cordially. "We'll not have much fuss. But there's the chicken and the cake and a salad——" She looked at Ellen interrogatively. "A salad?" she asked.

Ellen had been listening to the rapidly maturing plans with some inward dissatisfaction. She had asked these superior women from the office to an informal luncheon—it would be "fierce," thought Ellen, to have mama and Mrs. Callahan and Lizzie-Kate and the babies screaming and banging and laughing and gossiping in the kitchen, during the meal hour. The Kane house was so constructed that even whispers and smothered laughter and carefully lightened footsteps in the kitchen would easily penetrate into the dining room.

"Help!" said Ellen. "You'd think it was a wedding. Give 'em some spareribs like you had last night, mama, and let it go, at that!"

"Listen to that!" Mrs. Murphy said, under her breath, in utter despair and contempt.

"Oh, Ellen, dear, you want it nice for them!" her sister exclaimed. Even the temperate Mrs. Callahan said reproachfully:

"You couldn't sit your friends down to spareribs, Ellen. I never heard the like of that in all my days. Why, at home even we'd kill a little pig, or maybe a goose, and have the lovely gooseberry jam that'd go with it, and maybe hot potato cake with the rich yeller butter melting out of it——"

"But Mrs. Callahan—but Mrs. Callahan——" Ellen protested eagerly. "These are just some of the girls from the office, that go out every day and have a cream cheese sandwich and a cup of cocoa, maybe! They won't expect much——"

"They'll get it then," Mrs. Murphy said grimly. "The least you could give them is a fowl—or maybe a young turkey——"

"Mama, for heaven's sake! Who ever heard of a turkey in June? You'd have them all laid out! They're on their way to a

wedding anyway—Miss Chase, who was in the office so long. And they'll get scads of food there—"

"Why not lobster salad, and then the chicken with stuffed potatoes and new peas and maybe asparagus, and hot rolls, and a few things like celery and jelly—" Lizzie-Kate was beginning, when Ellen again interrupted:

"Because I'd like it to be kind of—well, careless," she pleaded, with some hesitation. "You know, as if it was left over—as if it was just what we'd have anyway. I just said to them, 'Well, if you're down our way, there's no decent restaurant, so why don't you just come in and have a cup of tea with my sister and I?' I thought," added Ellen, after an imperceptible pause of faint doubt over the last pronoun, "I thought—remember last Saturday you had such good macaroni, heated up, and two fish balls left, and an omelette?"

"Well, I couldn't give them the leavings of a fish dinner!" Lizzie-Kate said, scandalized.

"As far as that goes," said Mrs. Callahan sensibly, "it's no more trouble to cook one kind of dinner than another. Leave it to Lizzie-Kate, dear, and you'll have enough and plenty, and better food than they get in restaurants, whether it's grand enough for your friends or not!"

They *wouldn't* understand her. Ellen made another effort. "I'd feel terrible if mama and Mrs. Callahan and everybody was slaving around in the kitchen," she said, in a distinctly ungracious tone.

"Then I'll do it all myself!" Lizzie-Kate, horrified at the faint suggestion of discord, said hastily and good humoredly.

"Then you'll not," Mrs. Callahan, who was Joe Kane's aunt by marriage and hence sometimes assumed a maternal tone toward Lizzie-Kate, said firmly. "You with two babies, and the weather getting so hot—"

"Why, what is there to do?" Lizzie-Kate asked innocently. "A little taste of lunch for a few girls—"

This was the note Ellen wanted.

"You could give them a stew, or any old thing!" she said eagerly.

"You wouldn't have to set the table for a stew, or get out your good napkins, or polish your forks," Mrs. Callahan said in deep sarcasm.

Ellen flushed resentfully. "My goodness!" she muttered. "I wish I hadn't asked them, the fuss you make! Another time I'll—"

Ellen had been saucy all her life. But she had proceeded no further than she perceived that she had gone too far. Her mother's old gray eyes grew stony in their gaze; Mrs. Callahan flushed with that pride and dignity that is the special attribute of her race.

Majestically the latter rose, and imperially she inclined her handsome head faintly in Ellen Murphy's direction.

"I'll say good by to you, Lizzie-Kate," she said pleasantly, "for I'm making the children an Indian meal pudding, and it has to be in me oven a full hour. Are you going, Mrs. Murphy? Good day to you, Ellen. Come and see me some day when you haven't a great many things you'd rather be doing."

"I hope you'll have too much good sense, Lizzie-Kate, to make any drop cookies for anyone, with all you have to do," Mrs. Murphy, departing, said pointedly to her older daughter, in a terrible silence. "I'd get a cake at a bakery that any one of them could buy for thirty cents, and good enough for them! And be sure you send them on to the wedding good and hungry, that they'd always tell it on the Murphys that they didn't get enough to eat under their roof. No wonder the foreigners get rich

on us, with their delicatessen," added Mrs. Murphy, her voice now coming back like a banner through the doorway whence she and Mrs. Callahan had taken their leave. "If it's to give your friends a little ham that's like a few shavings out of a carpenter's shop, and a plaster of Paris cake full of eggs the paper itself called rots and spots—"

Lizzie-Kate, hospitably and distressedly seeing them to the doorway, turned back into the kitchen, to see Ellen, with the baby in her lap, her eyes bright and hard, her cheeks burning and her breath coming quickly, regarding her from the rocker.

"Now, what did I do *then*?" Ellen asked defiantly.

"Oh, Ellen!" her sister sighed, sitting down beside the table and passing her hand over her troubled eyes.

"Don't you mind—they weren't mad," Ellen stated uncomfortably, after an uneasy silence.

"Oh, I think you hurt poor Mrs. Callahan's feelings terribly, Ellen," Lizzie-Kate said miserably. "You as good as said that you didn't want her to come and help out—and you know how wonderfully she cooks chicken, with cream and tapioca in the gravy, and everything! And mama, too—she has so few pleasures, and she does like to make those zephyr potatoes, and cake, and all! And it's only day after tomorrow—they'll not get over it for a week at least—and it does make me feel so badly—"

"Well!" Ellen sniffed and was silent. "Well!" she said again, hesitantly and doubtfully, with her eyes fixed anxiously upon Lizzie-Kate. "But my gracious, what could I say, Lizzie-Kate?" she pleaded, suddenly softened and penitent. "I *can't* have mama fussing and stewing out there all through lunch, and Mrs. Callahan walking back and forth—"

"You made them feel terrible," said Lizzie-Kate, dispassionate but inexorable.

Ellen looked down, sniffed and twisted a pretty ankle sideways to jerk the rocker, which her mother had sometimes described as the "traveler of the world," back into position.

"Maybe you'd go over now and step into Mrs. Callahan's?" Lizzie-Kate suggested mildly, dampening a towel at the sink to wipe the sticky face of young Flurry.

"Maybe I wouldn't!" answered Ellen briefly, with a scowl.

Lizzie-Kate, unsurprised, continued to hold her hand patiently under the faucet whence hot water was supposed presently to flow, and Ellen continued to rock the blissfully sleeping baby. Nothing further was said upon the subject, until the unexpected arrival of Mr. Clement Aloysius Riordan.

Clem came to the kitchen door exactly as if it was an ordinary week-day, and an ordinary kitchen, and

as if he didn't know or very much care whether Ellen Murphy was there or not. Clem with some girls could be a dashing, witty, audacious sort of man, big, good looking and confident. But not with Ellen Murphy.

This afternoon he had been walking about the neighborhood for twenty minutes and had twice passed Lizzie-Kate's house, moving rapidly and as one absorbed in thought, and all the time



Miss Carter—lean, dyspeptic and eye-glassed.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACE

"Well," laughed Mrs. Murphy. "would anyone like Mart to go out and buy some bath mittens for supper?"

his entire being had thrilled to the one thought of Ellen, the one hope that today he might, by special action of a generous Providence, have one more glimpse of her somehow and somewhere.

She must have got home from the office early, was the first heart-chilling discovery. For the five-twelve and the five-twenty-nine trains came in, and she did not descend from their platforms. Maybe she was late—

Or maybe she was sitting in the kitchen with Lizzie-Kate. His heart turned to water at the mere thought, and his mouth was salt. Maybe she was sitting there, with her tousled bronze head and her bold, black-fringed blue eyes—

Clem walked briskly past the gate. You'd wonder, he thought forlornly, that that child of Lizzie-Kate's wouldn't be running about, and Ellen after him—

If he heard her voice calling "Clem!" he would pretend not to notice, for the first time—

He heard nothing. So after a while he opened the gate, his heart like a great dry lump in his throat and his honest face flushed, and went about the house to the kitchen door.

The orb of day itself, wedged into the old rocker, would not have dazzled Clem more than did Ellen, with a silk-clad ankle tucked beneath her and the little lolling body of the baby in her arms.

"Come in, Clem," said the immortally beautiful young voice, with resentment and appeal and laughter and all delicious provocation in it at once. "My sister's giving me the call-down of the year. I was just sassing mama and Mrs. Callahan, and Lizzie-Kate's excommunicating me!"

"I am not, then!" said Lizzie-Kate, with a shocked laugh. "It's her own guilty conscience that makes her feel bad, Clem."

"Why would you sass them?" Clem asked thickly, intoxicated at being here at the table, unconscious (Continued on page 112)



Solitaire had seen enough. The man approaching wore soiled overalls of blue jeans and what he carried was a smallish rounded package, enclosed in paper wrappings.

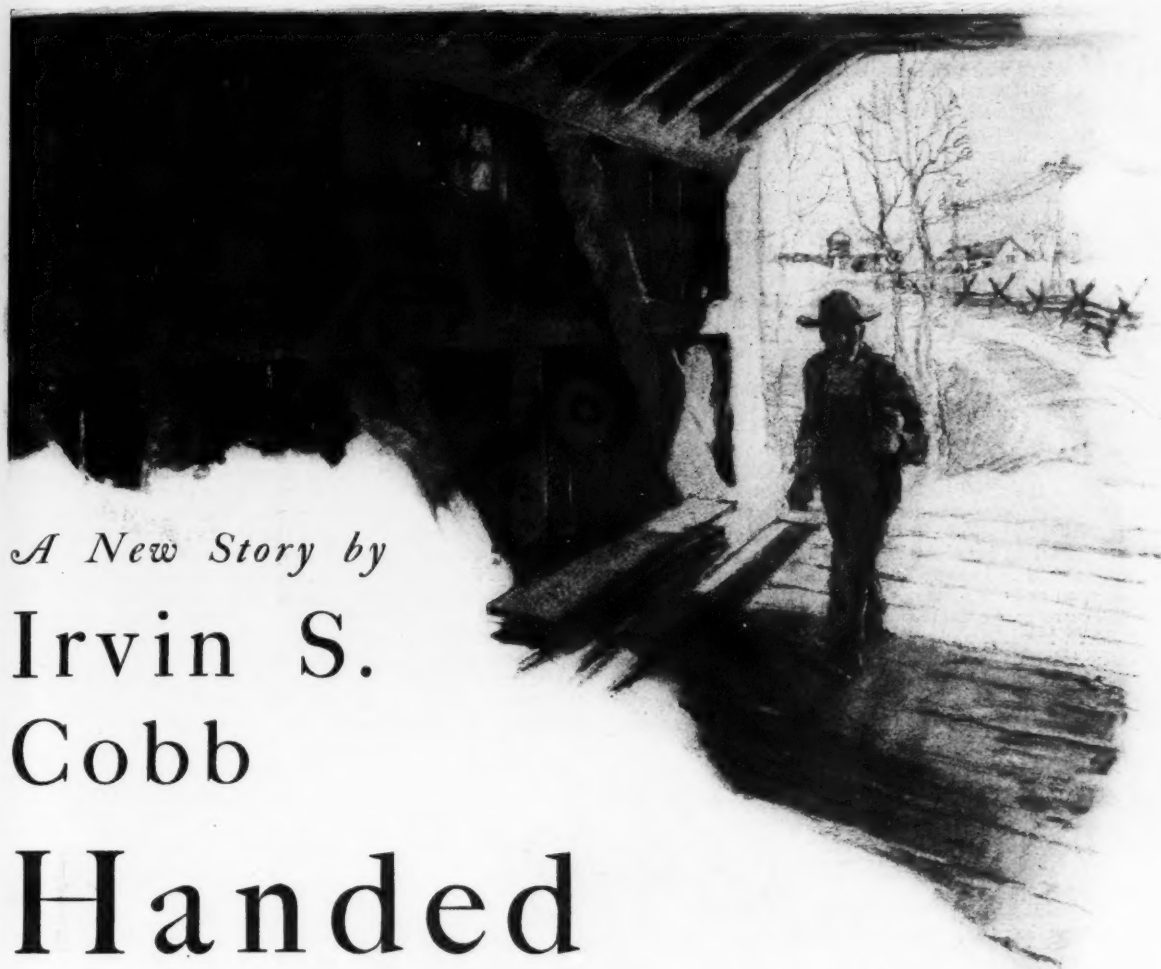
Red-

ACROSS a yellow creek ran a covered bridge perhaps two hundred and fifty feet long. The street narrowed where it met the bridge at its western end and broadened out again where it took up at the bridge's other mouth; but soon thereafter, as though depleted by the effort of getting over the hollow of the roiled stream, it lost all character of a street and frankly became a sand road, weaving off through the piney flats.

The bridge was built of wood, old but sound. Along its middle breadth even in broad day it was dark, almost, as a tunnel. There were small windows, set like square port-holes high up and just under the pitched angles of the roof, but their panes were so dirty and so coated over with cobwebbing that they let in no light at all, and the loose ends of the cobwebs so thickened with dust and so fuzzy with hayseeds that they dangled down straight and stiff, like weighted top strings. Such sunshine as got into the center span at all came in by crannies overhead, where from age and weathering the shingles were warped apart, and it made sliced dapplings on the worn boards.

This being the nesting season, the barn swallows made soft whirring sounds with their wings as they went in and out of their dry-plastered homes under the rafters. At one place the 'dobe houses of the birds studded the side walls in an effect of a primitive mural decoration.

Just here, where the gloom was nice and thick, Solitaire waited for his man. He had been waiting for him for nearly half an hour now, sheltered behind one of the big square timbers that carried the upper works of the bridge. Where he was, he was excellently well sheltered. A person coming from the east to traverse the bridge had no chance to see him until abreast of him, if then. A person coming from the other direction might possibly see him, if that person



A New Story by

Irvin S.
Cobb

Handed

Illustrations by Forrest C. Crooks

traveled afoot and slowly and had very keen eyesight, or if Solitaire should move. He took due care not to move.

In this time while he waited, three pedestrians, all east bound, went right on by him with no sign on the part of any one of them of recognition of his presence, and a team and wagon rumbled through, making a tremendous clatter in that pent-in place and forcing spurts of dust from between the floor planks. In his ambush back of the support for the superstructure Solitaire felt quite safe. Better lighting would have revealed him, though, as an alien and a suspicious figure for these present surroundings. Realizing this, he was grateful for his artificial gloaming.

Because Solitaire nearly always played a lone hand he was Solitaire. All things considered, he found in the long run that it paid better. If, on the one hand, he took all the risk, on the other hand, he took all the profits out of an undertaking. When the job was finished there was nobody to claim a split with him nor did he run in the danger that somebody might talk too much. This was his way and, owing to it, he almost had lost the name he had been born with, which was Smith.

But in the matter in hand he had, by press of circumstances, been forced to break the rule and take on a partnership. Even so, he retained the captaincy, holding command of the major performance and playing the major rôle. In the jargon of the calling he was the Get-'em-up Guy. Five years ago the trade term for him would have been Stick-up; but crook language changes fast to match the changes of the times and the seasons. Upon him largely depended the success or failure of the major operation.

Still, and too, the duties of his associates carried responsibilities with them. Feary had their small swift new car halted, in readiness with the engine running, a hundred feet from the west entrance of the bridge. His task would be to cover the retreat, with gun fire if necessary, and afterwards to take Solitaire and himself away from there at fast flight. He was one of the Hard

Boiled People, or by an argot now almost obsolete, a yeggman, bald in his craftsmanship but crudely efficient. His work, like Solitaire's, lay ahead of him. But the Sweet Caps Kid already had done his share. For two months now he had been upon the ground, spying out the lay of the land, generally getting the hang and the swing of local things. This had taken time, entailing also upon him a spell of uncongenial manual labor; nevertheless, and smothering his distaste for bread earned in the sweat of the brow, he had done his part well.

So both the others voted when, they having arrived, he made his reports to them separately. Feary, two days earlier, had come in overland, driving the car. Solitaire had traveled down by train from Richmond, which was the nearest large city, and had rented a room in a cheap boarding house. Feary was lodged elsewhere, and Sweet Caps yet farther away than either of them. It was desirable that in all preliminary measures they must seem to be as strangers to one another. It not only was desirable, it was most essential. Their one joint meeting had taken place the night before. To the conference the conferees had come by different ways, walking guardedly. The place of their meeting was a disused cotton gin at the end of the short side street whereon Solitaire temporarily was domiciled.

Beforehand, when the project was framed, the terms of division had been arrived at. For having, in the first place, smelled out the prospect Solitaire was to have a fourth; he also would be entitled to a second quarter share for his actual part in the operation. As the moneyed member of the firm he had from his own pocket provided funds for prior expenses. Out of his fifty percent he would reimburse himself for such outlays. The remaining fifty percent would go to Feary and the Sweet Caps Kid, cut even ways between the two of them.

So, at the rendezvous, there was no need for further discussion of financial details. Nor was there need for rehearsing, excepting

most briefly, the steps previously taken, nor the somewhat unusual conditions which had brought the three so far from the Big Town for this venture. Regarding this last they already knew all there was to know. It was Solitaire who had nosed the knowledge out.

The situation here was this: The Tuckahominy Mills, the second largest textile plant of private ownership in the State, had lately, by reason of a death and a deathbed request, come into the possession of new proprietors. The original founder of the business had, in his last will, devised that a goodish sum in surplus profits should proportionately be divided among such of his employees as had served him for a stated length of time, or longer. One group of his legatees was content to abide by this decree. But there was a second group who opposed it, proclaiming undue influences on a failing and moribund mind in the final hours of their kinsman.

In this issue and on this point litigation and yet more litigation had followed. With other arguments, the contestants advanced the claim that no individual in his right faculties conceivably could have desired to bestow so unreasonably large a benefaction upon workers hired at current top wages and abundantly paid for their past labors. They pointed out that in the active life of the decedent there had been no provable act or word which would indicate in him the forming of so generous and so irrational an impulse. But the high judges ruled that the will was good and the will must stand. By order of court the money, on or before specified dates, must be distributed in specie and currency—for so the testator expressly had required—to the eleven hundred and odd operatives competent to share in it. The total, or any considerable part of the total, made a delectable beautiful stream.

The purpose, therefore, of the federated three in caucus this night in the abandoned cotton gin at the foot of Solitaire's street, was to divert this golden, green-backed bonus out of its ordained courses into a private channel of their own providing.

The Sweet Caps Kid was speaking, his jubilation seeking to lift his note, his instinct for caution striving to hold him to undertones. So his voice ran curiously up and down: "Now, here's the plant just like I gets it: The regular paymaster of the company is supposed to be bringin' the jack down on the train that gets in at three-forty. Well, the jack will be on the same train, all right, alrighty, but he won't have it on him. Get what I mean? The paymaster'll have a couple of private bulls along with him for a bodyguard, same as they've been doin' here ever since the Ballard mob throwed a scare into these folks six weeks ago with that post office job over at Vanceton, which is in the next county to this one; and he'll have a leather money satchel hitched on to him by a chain locked round his waist, as per usual. And him and his two bulls will get in a car together at the depot and ride up the main street and over the big iron bridge, goin' straight to the mills. But all he'll have in his little keister will be a few hundreds in loose silver—for change when a mill hand's bit don't run to even money. Get me?"

"But here's the right dope: While he's gettin' off the train on

the side next to the depot another guy will be climbin' off on the other side. My info is that he'll be in jumpers or overalls, like a guy finishin' off a day's work somewheres up the line and on his way back home. Anyways, he'll be carryin' the real bunch of jack—the important money. Maybe it'll just be tied up in a paper bundle like an extra shirt or maybe it'll be hid inside his lunch pail—dinner bucket's what these hicks down here would call it. I ain't right sure on that point, but anyways it's dead certain to be one or the other of these two ways. All of it bein' in bills, it'll fold up nice and snug.

"Well, while the three guys with the phony roll are on their way to the front office of the mill, the guy with the big jack will be ramblin' away from the depot, swingin' north, and he'll cross over by the old covered bridge that you already know about—the one that's half a mile upstream from the iron bridge. Thinkin' that nobody's noticin' him, he'll head for the mill, meanin' to get in by the back door alongside the creek—river, they call it here.

"But he won't never get there—not with his bundle, anyways! These wisenheimers that run this dump think they're makin' it sweet and easy for themselves when all the time they're only makin' it sweeter and easier for us. First place, bein' a Saturday, it's the regular payday for the hands and they'd all be at the mill waitin' for their time even if there wasn't a special attraction to keep 'em there. Second place, everybody else in town that ain't in jail or sick in bed will be hangin' round there, too, to see the big pay-off of the gift money that this here old dead and gone pappy guy left to his pets. But say, listen: With any kind of a break it's goin' to be us three and not them dumb hicks that'll have the spendin' of—"

"Not so loud, Caps—you ain't makin' a speech," counseled the ever thoughtful Solitaire. "This guy that's to bring the important money across—besides his bundle and his workin'

man's make-up, what else is there about him to help me spot him?"

"What else do you need? Chances are he'll be the only guy that'll come across that bridge, goin' toward the mill, round four o'clock tomorrow. Him comin' along with his nice tidy little bundle—ain't that enough? . . . Oh, folks"—even in his half whisperings his voice sang with the gloating that was in it—"oh, folks, this is goin' to be the swellest job that ever a small mob like this one pulled off anywheres! If they're only goin' to hand out one-quarter or one-third of the give-away dough tomorrow—and, as I told you, my tip all along is that they're figurin' to divide it up into three or four payments, a week apart, takin' care of the old hands first—why, what with the regular weekly payroll added on, the gross ought to run big.

"Why, it might go to seventy grand—eighty grand—ninety, even! And if they've switched



Solitaire could not wait another minute. He must have a look at what was inside, count it bill by bill.



"Oh folks!" said the Sweet Caps Kid, "this is goin' to be the swellest job ever pulled off anywheres."

the play unbeknownst and decided to bring along the whole amount that's due to these rubes all in one chunk—but say, that's expectin' too much! My cut on what we do get is goin' be enough for me. Soft livin' for all three of us—huh?"

In the darkness where they squatted they made little greedy sounds with their lips as though sucking juicy morsels. The leader was the first to swallow his imagined tidbit down.

"Well," he said, "the rest of the play is clear enough, eh? Me and Pink, here, we lam in the little car with the stuff. Some-

wheres down the line we ditch her in a swamp—Lord knows there's plenty of swamps between here and the coast. Then, if there's no hitch, we meet you, Caps, in Charleston four or maybe six days from now, for the big split. If we get there first we'll wait, layin' quiet at that place down by the station where——"

"Don't worry about that," cut in the scout. "I'll be waitin' there myself when you get in."

"Wouldn't it be better if you stuck round for a couple or three days anyhow?" suggested the bulky Feary, in his thick,

eaten-out rumble. "You beatin' it too soon might set these here hick bulls to thinkin' somethin', and if they trailed you—well, you know there's goin' to be the devil raised all over when the blow-off comes. And——"

"Not a chance," said the Kid crisply.

The Kid quite often had heard that saying touching on honor among thieves, but being a thief himself he never experimented, if possible to do otherwise, with a view to testing the soundness of the proverb.

"I'm trustin' you two with the bundle for these four or five days because I got to—and that's long enough. I'm beatin' it out of here Sunday, bright and fair. I gave the foreman my notice last Monday. Tomorrow I'm through. And Sunday I blow. I'm sick of this whole country—sick of gettin' blisters on my hands hustlin' stuff in the shippin' room over at that damn cotton mill, sick of talkin' to these Johnny Raws and country Janes that don't speak my language. And I'm sick of the chow they feed you on, thinkin' it's food—corn bread and cow peas and fried fat meat and boiled rice and gummy yellow yams. I don't care if I never see no more boiled rice again as long as I live. Me, with my roll, for the Main Stem quick as ever the rattler can get me back there!"

As he waited, the three foot travelers went by Solitaire but they all came from the east, from behind him, and so he gave them no heed excepting to flatten himself the more closely into his protecting jog until they passed. Then, soon after, the wagon rattled through in the dust cloud of its own raising. Then, watching out from behind his upright, he saw a lone pedestrian coming out of the west and heading toward him. It was a man, moving along briskly. He carried something under his left arm. For a very brief space his figure was framed in the squared opening of the bridge,

"Stand still, bo!" commanded Solitaire. "Don't you move! And don't squawk!"

The advice appeared superfluous. From fright and astonishment the man was instantly rigid. Only his midriff, obeying a perfectly natural impulse, shrank mechanically inward under the pressure of that blued-steel muzzle.

"What's in that bundle you got?" asked Solitaire, his voice laden with menace. "Talk fast—but talk low." Ordinary procedure would have been to loot the victim without questioning him, but here Solitaire must make sure. In a business so important as this there must be no mistake made. He counted on fear to bring forth the truth.

But fear, it seemed, had in this case gone further. It locked the overalled man's jaws and swelled up his tongue. Striving painfully to answer, he only stammered:

"P-p-p-p——"

He strove harder:

"P-a-a——"

"I know—payroll," supplemented Solitaire, piecing out for him. "Payroll and what else?"

The other tried again but choked on his unintelligible effort. His stutterings made no sense.

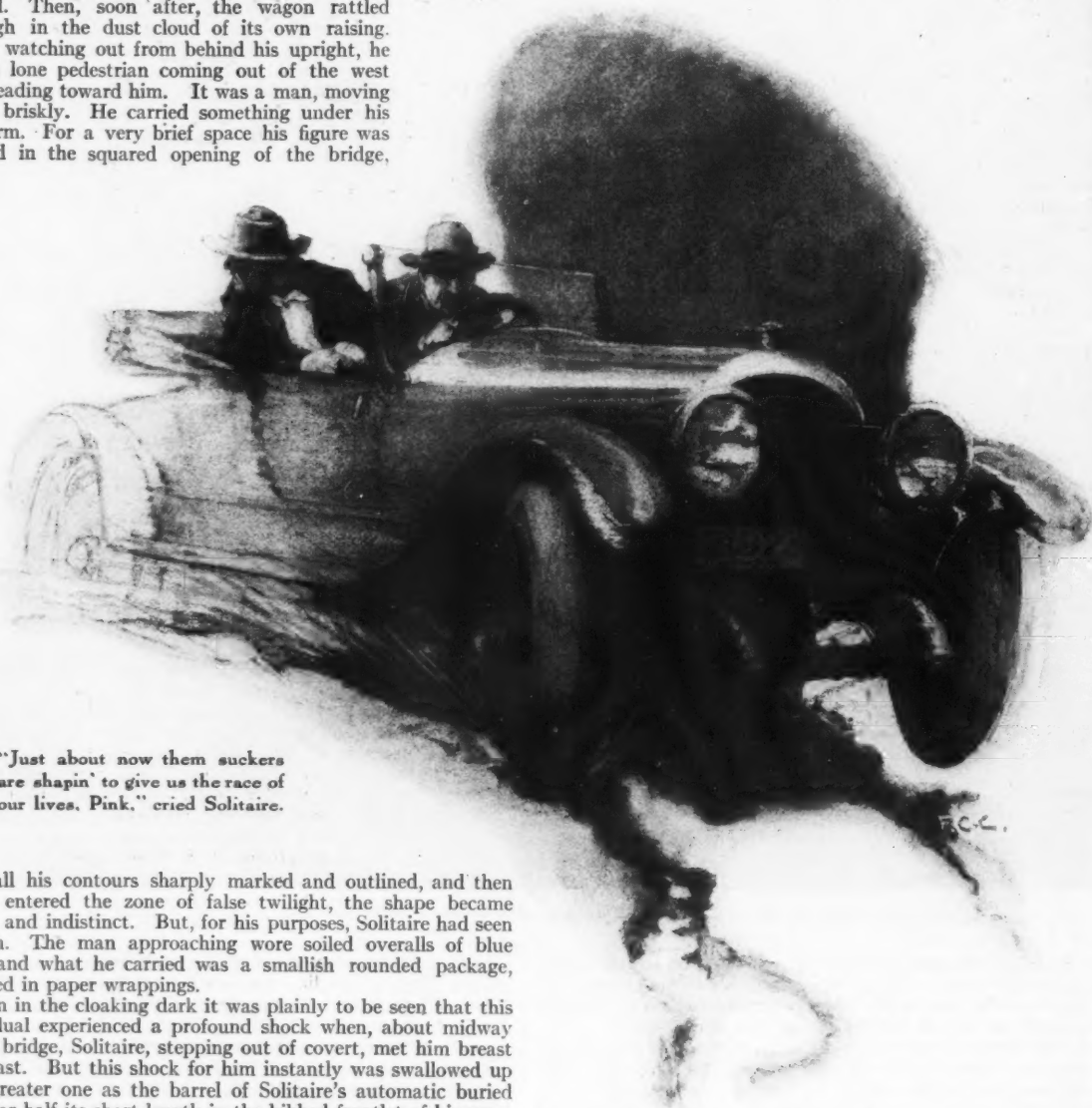
"Tell it, bo, if you're hopin' to live," prompted Solitaire. "What you got here?—what does it come to?—quick!"

"Q-q-quar—quar——"

"Just about now them suckers are shapin' to give us the race of our lives, Pink," cried Solitaire.

with all his contours sharply marked and outlined, and then as he entered the zone of false twilight, the shape became blurry and indistinct. But, for his purposes, Solitaire had seen enough. The man approaching wore soiled overalls of blue jeans and what he carried was a smallish rounded package, enclosed in paper wrappings.

Even in the cloaking dark it was plainly to be seen that this individual experienced a profound shock when, about midway of the bridge, Solitaire, stepping out of covert, met him breast to breast. But this shock for him instantly was swallowed up in a greater one as the barrel of Solitaire's automatic buried itself for half its short length in the bibbed frontlet of his overalls, belly-high on him.



He gagged and gurgled, the sounds fluttering in his constricted pipes. With a supreme desperation he got the final syllables out:

"—m-m-m-m-il-l-l-ion!"

"Quarter of a million! What?"

Incredulity, gloating, a feeling of exultation so great he scarcely could make his brain accept what his ears had caught up out of these scraps of words—the incredible admission temporarily stripped Solitaire of caution. His own voice rose:

"Quarter of a million—that what you're tryin' to say?"

Quite speechless now, the man nodded his head as fast as he could wag it.

It was incredible and yet it was true. Not the payroll and a third or a fourth of the bonus; but the payroll and the full sum of the bonus lumped together—a quarter of a million! Past believing and still a fact.

With his left hand Solitaire snatched the parcel out of the stiffened crook of his man's elbow. It was heavy, firm, solid, the very heft and shape of it a comfort to his clutching palm.

Solitaire, though, was no 'prentice hand to be swept off his feet by tidings of ever so great and thrillsome a joy—to break and run before the task appointed to him had been rounded out and finished. There were formalities remaining; essentials in the ritual of his craft.

He stepped back a pace, his gun playing in his grip. "Get 'em up, buddy . . . both hands . . . get 'em up high! Now turn round slow, slow—that's it; now stand right still."

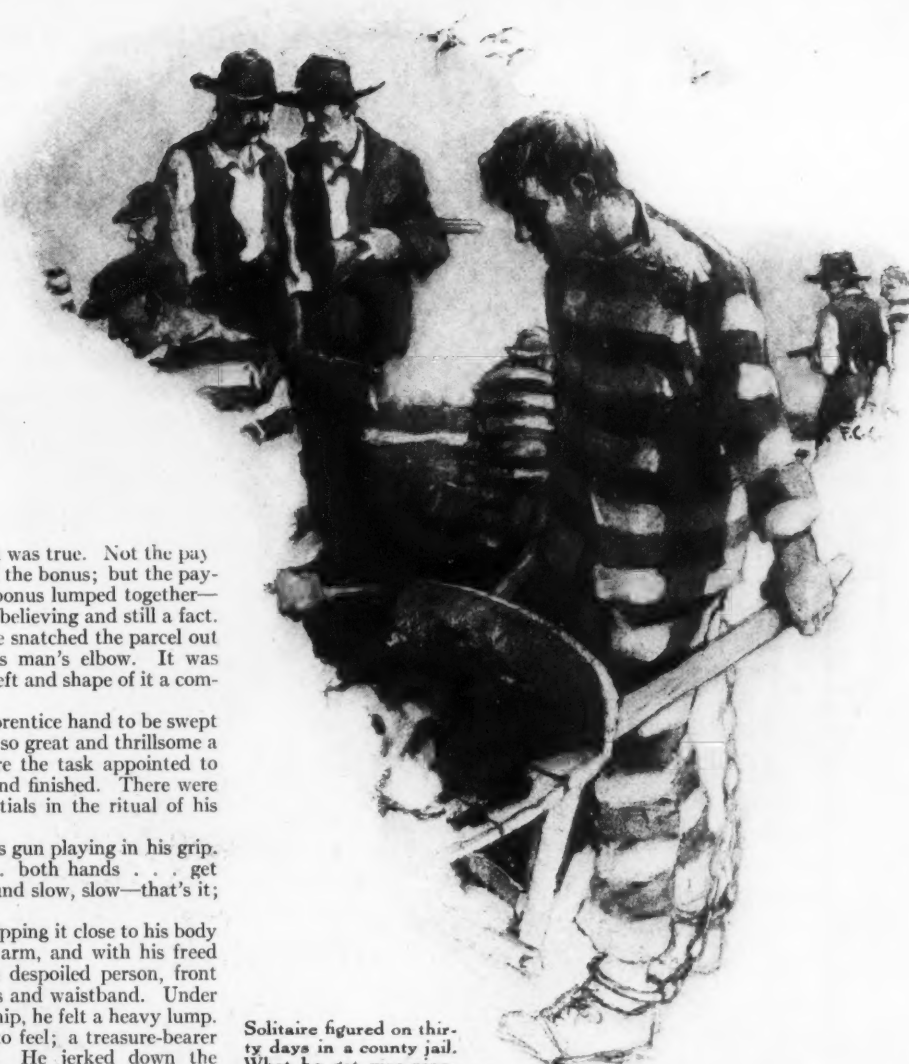
He shifted the package, gripping it close to his body by the pressure of his right arm, and with his freed hand he swiftly slapped the despoiled person, front and back, flanks and armpits and waistband. Under the thick jeans, on the right hip, he felt a heavy lump. That was what he expected to feel; a treasure-bearer naturally would go armed. He jerked down the shoulder-straps of the overalls; he drew from a rear pocket of the wearer's trousers a revolver and dropped it into his own side coat pocket. He yanked the sagging overgarment still farther down until it bunched and corrugated in folds on the other's lower legs. For added emphasis to this, his final warning, he bored his gun-snout into the man's spine.

"Stick right where you are for ten minutes, bo," he admonished. "If you move—if you squawk—if you turn your head to look round—if you make a sound—there's a pal of mine waitin' right here, handy by, to plug you good and plenty. You ain't got a Chinaman's chance. Ten minutes, remember, and then you beat it back out of here the same way you came."

He retreated swiftly, confident that no outcry of alarm would be raised behind him. His confidence was not misplaced. The robbed one, goggling, gasping—and obedient—stood stiffly where he was, his hands above his head, his ankles caught in the accumulations of their blue jeans fetters, a cold sweat rising out of his hair roots, and on his face the look of one who has had a tremendous and a stupefying surprise.

With his gun bestowed in its breast holster inside the vent of his waistcoat, Solitaire came out of the easterly mouth of the covered bridge. He did not run. A casual eye would have been caught by the sight of him running. But he walked very swiftly, like a man going upon an errand calling for haste.

Seeing him coming and seeing that he carried a round small package circular in shape with flattened ends, like a canister, and enclosed in paper coverings well tied on, with stout cord running round and round it and criss-crossed over its top and its bottom, Feary set the car in motion. It was going ten miles an hour as Solitaire, hurrying forward, swung himself up into the



Solitaire figured on thirty days in a county jail. What he got was ninety days on a chain gang.

seat by the driver. It was going thirty-five when it came alongside the first of several many-windowed buildings of the Tuckahominy Mills Company that stretched in an irregular row along a low ridge of clayey red loam where the land dropped away to the shallow ravine of the creek.

Out of the corners of their eyes as they passed, the two men in the swiftly moving car saw that in front of one of the smaller buildings—one that bore the word *Office* painted above its doors—a big touring car stood, and about it a crowd that might number hundreds, patently made up of townspeople and operatives. Some few of these persons turned their heads with a mild curiosity as they whizzed on by, but their passing at such speed made no special stir among the crowd. Even in that flash of time they both could tell that much.

Nevertheless, Feary mended their gait. Immediately they left behind the most outlying of the negro cabins on the fringes of the town, and the heavier valley loam gave place to a light white sand where their way wound in and out among the loblolly ranks of cut-over pine lands. Until now neither had spoken a word.

With his eyes front on the road unreeling before him and his capable hands juggling the steering rim of the careening car, Feary, out of one corner of his mouth, presently spoke:

"Got it, huh?"

"Sure," answered Solitaire, who jounced and slid on the cushions, with his body half twisted about as he watched behind them, searching for signs of any pursuit in the spindling second growth, which whirled past, life-size.

(Continued on page 128)



PHOTOGRAPH BY NICKOLAS MURAT

*South of Washington Arch, the magnificent structure designed
by Stanford White, Lies*

GREENWICH VILLAGE

The Melting Pot of American Art—New York's Bohemia

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Greenwich Village

By O. O. McINTYRE

COME for a stroll through New York's "Bohemia!" It is a cloistered spot a stone's throw from the city's roar where Art and Hokum struggle valiantly for the highest expression. Welcome to Greenwich Village!

Watch Tiny Tim, arch-apostle of indigestion, in tam and velveteen coat, sell his tray of "soul candy."

See Sonia the cigarette girl, with cherry-red lips! The priceless Clivette, the Man in Black and his inspired daughter Sappho! Peter the smocked silhouette cutter!

Walt the caricaturist, who will sketch you as you dine. Diantha the bead girl. Jud the expressionist. Takiro the hatless Japanese poet. Fashion illustrators. Basket weavers. Brass pounders. Boys from Wanamaker's.

Hear Bobby Edwards carol in ribald song to the tune of his cigar box ukulele:

Way down South in Greenwich Village
Where the spinsters come for thrillage!

The Village sprawls about the triangular squares that spread out from Washington Arch where Fifth Avenue ends. There are Queen Anne cottages with ivy-clad lintels, musty stable studios, lean-to coffee shops and Colonial mansions with foot scrapers and shiny brass knockers.

Here is a section of New York not swallowed up in the omnivorous maw of progress. It slumbers along with the picturesque dreamers, nurturing the shiftless and cradling the genius.

The keystone of The Village is the historic old Brevoort—the last stand of the glorified table d'hôte—with its tiny office gay with French feuilletons. Southward is the dreamy background of imposing peace and quiet, studded at night with the flaming cross of the Judson Memorial and the Hotel Judson, haven of struggling artists and writers. Nine out of ten famous writers and artists have lived there at some time in their lives.

It is when the first candle sputters in Grace Godwin's Garret that the village awakes from the slow tides of sleep. At Washington Arch the lumbering buses unload their quota of timid sightseers. Stable doors open. The curtain goes up on the nightly show.

Short-haired ladies and long-haired men move across the Square to cheerful open hearths in the food caravanserais. The intellectual fires are burning.

In a far-away corner at Bertillotti's the smocked young man begins reading Freud. Tonight he seeks the ambiguous thrill in higher thought. Tomorrow he punches the time clock at Macy's.

The worn brick pavements fill with leisurely groups on their way to see John Barrymore's house right next to a stable. Ambidextrous guides lead their wide-eyed charges down the middle of narrow streets flanked with flapping wet wash.

In Frank Shay's bookshop the boy book reviewers, newspaper columnists and juvenile cynics are defending Cabell and damning Sumner. While about the counters girls with slip-on dresses and ponderous horn glasses peep at tomes unpurgated.

In Sheridan Square the auto salesman from Detroit hears the brigands roar under the buccaneering beams of Don's Pirate Den and lifts the loudest roar himself when he gets the check.

At The Mystic Shrine the sad-eyed lady lecturer reveals the phosphorous painting of the crucifixion. Her daughter is the reincarnation of Cleopatra and is inspired by Cleo to fashion reams of verse. She also dances odes to things and dies at the end of the dance, as is the custom.

In Barrow Street is the "secret" home of the intrepid Arctic explorer who seeks the quiet of the Village to soothe nerves rubbed raw by civilization.

Around a corner is The Samovar, a low-ceiled old stable where prim old ladies gather—the last stand of lower Fifth Avenue's generation of lavender and old lace. Up the street a sawdust-coated place where young men exchange boutonnières.

And just off MacDougall Street the studio of Miss Margaret Wilson. Hard by The Bamboo Forest, where Chinese students from Columbia serve home-cooked native dishes and tutor those seeking to master the intricacies of Chinese.

The whole is a disorderly jumble of tea rooms, coffee houses and specialty shops. Each clashing the cymbals of Freedom.

A few yards of chintz, a coal-oil lamp and an iron kettle out front, and lo! a Village shop or tea room.

Tommy's, The Wood Box, Vagabondia, The Mad Hatter, The Pepper Pot, The Jade Buddha, Peg's Pantry, The Pig and Whistle, The Red Head, The Blue Horse, The Flamingo, Romany Marie's, Jean's Dye Pot, and so on without end.

From the cobwebby attics and dank cellars come the sagacious and slovenly, the unfed and unwashed, whose only crime is "idealism."

Some to whom Art is the mightiest shibboleth and others to whom Art inspires the interrogative: "Art who? And what's his last name?"

Overexploited and undernourished, the Village greets Life with an Eva Tanguayish shrug of "I don't care!"

It will apparently be as unmoved over the master hand that paints the deathless canvas as it is over the unspeakable bordel a few doors away where men paint their lips.

What cares the Village if ladies stencil their stockings, shear their locks, rouge their knees or smoke thimble pipes? Or if the men go hatless, sockless and shirtless?

No elusive complex the Village pursues is so complex as the Village itself. As rakish as a pirate brig, it manages to streak hocus-pocus with the alloy of greatness.

Genius is combed from the attic as well as the parlor and many of the foremost poets, authors, painters and sculptors came from there.

Out of a tumble-down shack two years ago a penniless youth named Schwartz went forth to Rome with the Tiffany prize to pursue his studies in plenty.

It was at a corner table in The Mad Hatter that Hendrik Van Loon patiently wrote "The History of Mankind" and at the same table drew his illustrations. O. Henry, too, wove many classic tales at the café tables.

In the salons you will find such gifted persons as Frederick MacMonnies, the sculptor, Rose O'Neill, mother of the Kewpies, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, and a host of others.

Few Village stores open during the day and the hubbub of trade reaches the crescendo after the dinner hour. Here one may buy a ten cent cigarette holder for a dollar and not give a hang. After all, one must remember the "atmosphere."

There are batik gowns, hand-woven dresses, old samovars made week before last in New Jersey, metal work, lamp shades, "new" antiques, naughty pictures and trick ukuleles.

After the shopping hour, the alley theaters with dramas sometimes classic but more often guttery draw their heavy audiences, who are unconcerned over the hard bench seats and gunnysack curtains as they thrill to Art's Great Impetus.

There is Harry Kemp's shrine of art with the vagabond poet selling tickets, passing programs and taking part in the play.

Butler Davenport a little north of The Village has his Bramhall Players with Davenport directing, acting, producing and sleeping upstairs. If you like the play drop a coin in the collection plate when the curtain falls.

Too, the Provincetown Players, who paved the way for Eugene O'Neill to Broadway. Here is an institutional flower that grew in the bog—giving the Rialto astounding plays.

After the play, to the Club Gallant, that aristocratic haunt of Barney Gallant, the Village Mayor. A shrewd little Hungarian, with a Piccadilly accent and Chesterfieldian manners.

A six by four stage with a Continental review and a female Balieff. Intimate and cozy, and one may find a sprinkling of Broadway's Who's Who willing to step out on the Lilliputian dance floor and "do their stuff."

One sees the circusey side of the Village and chuckles. And then turns down one of the quiet streets going home to see silhouetted figures in studio windows—patiently sculpturing, painting and scribbling until dawn pinks the sky.

And one wonders and wonders!

Jemima Made

*A Story of a Woman who
it Means to Love*

Illustrations by



Jemima, slim, prim, with
the clean beauty of a
tulip, was made out of
the stuff of martyrs.

THE missionary passion burned like red pepper in the soul of Jemima Taylor. Slim, trim, prim, with the bright, clean, upstanding beauty of a tulip or a hollyhock, she was made out of the stuff of martyrs. When she came to the town of Glory, she came, with her preacher-father's picture, her Bible, her volume of Whittier's poems and her Book of Sermons, ostensibly in answer to a call for schoolmistress, but covertly to "carry Christ."

And her Christ was the Christ of a New England Puritan, a figure unrecognizable upon the shores of Galilee or in the narrow alleys of Jerusalem, a Christ who did not eat and drink with sinners, who lifted no healing hand upon the Sabbath day, and who not only scourged buyers and sellers from the Temple but who gathered stones for the surer execution of a "certain woman"; a frigid, unsparing northern divinity whom it was difficult to imagine as the Beloved Son of any Father, human or divine. Nevertheless, in worship of Him, Jemima Taylor bent her slim pale knees and folded her slim brown hands. And in His name

she felt strong enough to walk across hot ploughshares, to brave lions or—if it were really necessary for His service—to eat at the same table with Peter McQuarg!

It was not long before, as schoolmistress, she knew every man in the country, beginning with the more familiar town dwellers in that town of fifteen houses and ending after a few Saturdays and Sundays with the names and faces of the ranchers who rode or drove in for their weekly business and recreation.

In town the school board were her lovers to a man. Honesty Grill said that she "put him in mind of an old-fashioned garden"; Rawle Jones, the barkeeper, said she was as "pretty as a spotted pig under a painted wagon," which, with a wink, was his way of paying compliments; Bertie Maroon, the male milliner and barber, said she had a "poke-bonnet kind of face" and was accused of sitting up nights to fashion one for her.

When she told them sternly that Glory must have a new schoolhouse, of concrete, well heated and with modern ventilation, they knew that this must indeed be so and bent their brows. It would cost a pile of money and Glory was "short," always "short" and always in debt to Rawle Jones. But "something, Miss Taylor, would sure be done." When she started a Sunday school for her children the attendance was predominantly masculine and adult. It brought a grave slim dimple into that pink cheek of hers, to see them move across the school-room and settle into the little overwhelmed seats. But she thrilled to hear them singing "In the vineyard of our Father, Daily work we find to do" or "There's a home for little children above the bright blue sky," for she said to a rebellious sense of the comic, which had many a time been brought to death's door but which lived on faintly in spite of her, "except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

And there was so very much of the child in the souls and eyes and faces of these weather-beaten men; in all, that is, but the soul and eyes and face of Peter McQuarg. Plain to a Puritan instinct, there was set upon his countenance the Devil's seal of mockery. She would have dreaded his sure appearance on a Saturday evening if that had not meant also the sure appearance of his partner, Barney Griffith. She was not at all satisfied that Barney was not a Devil's disciple—certainly he followed upon the heels of Peter like a swaggering and slender shadow—but for so young and beautiful a disciple, with so disarming a gay smile, for a disciple with so sweet a deference, for a disciple, in short, whose very apparent wildness and lack of anything so stern as a Puritan upbringing was subtly appealing to a woman's tenderness, there was hope. If she had been sent by a merciful Father to Glory in time to save the soul of Barney Griffith, she had not been sent in vain. Thus reasoned Jemima.

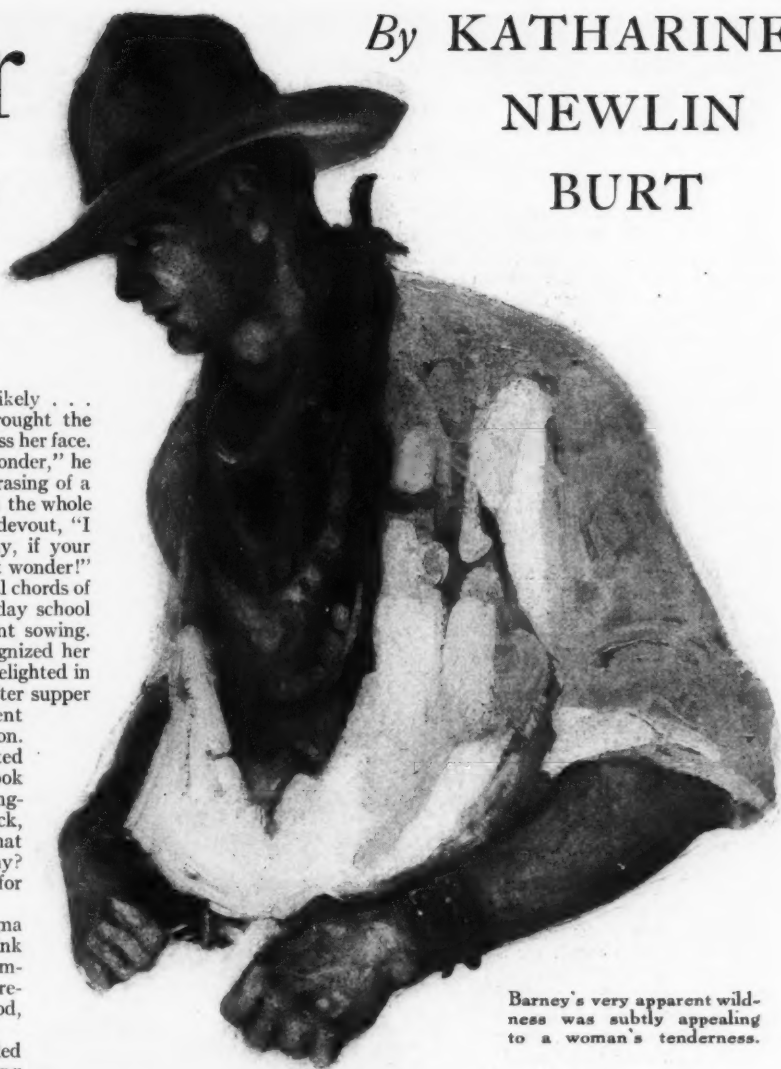
She lived in Room No. 3 at Mrs. Phin Clay's road house beside the creek which divided one half of Glory's buildings from the other, and she ate at Mrs. Clay's long narrow table. It was at this table on a Saturday and Sunday that she had to face McQuarg. Always he sat opposite to her. If necessary, he commandeered the seat. But this position was taken primarily for entertainment, not for admiration. His dark, weather-beaten, thirty-five year old face, given to terrifying vociferations, appalling stories of successful villainy perpetrated by himself and "the boys" he had known in a sinful past, prone to occasional queer oaths and quick with a sneering, whip-like mockery of her pretensions, took away her appetite. He had a horrible fashion of deferring to her speeches, of murmuring with a ducked

Over

Learned what Greatly

Robert W. Stewart

By KATHARINE
NEWLIN
BURT



Barney's very apparent wildness was subtly appealing to a woman's tenderness.

head, "Yes, ma'am? And then what?" or "Likely . . . likely!" in an incredulous drawl which brought the lively blood of unchristian fury tingling across her face.

At times he dared to be personal. "I wonder," he said once, interrupting her careful paraphrasing of a sentence from the Book of Sermons, to which the whole table was listening with eyes tender and devout, "I wonder what you'd look like, Miss Jemima, if your face was dirty. Kind of pretty, I wouldn't wonder!" And there thrilled a giggle through the vocal chords of the devout. Just so one bad boy at Sunday school will tear out an acre of "teacher's" patient sowing.

She could see too that he perfectly recognized her fury, her hatred and her fear, that he even delighted in the trilogy of her emotions. Sometimes after supper in the crowded little parlor, he would present himself like an empty vessel for reformation.

"I was onc't inside a church," he admitted reasonably, "and a man dressed up to look like a ghost sure give me a reg'lar dressing-down. When I begun to answer him back, they throwed me out. Now, do you call that a square deal, man to man, Miss Jemima? Would you 'a' had me throwed out jest for standin' up for myself thataway?"

"You were in God's house," said Jemima with a supreme exercise of courage, a pink forehead below her yellow hair, and a trembling voice, "and the parson was His representative. Would you talk back to God, Mr. McQuarg?"

"Likely . . . likely," sighed Peter; folded his hands between his knees and stuck his long tongue into his cheek. "You may be right about that representative business . . . but it ain't democracy!"

"Now I want to ast you, Miss Jemima, like one of your schoolards in the schoolhouse, would you marry a hard drinker?"

Young Barney Griffith, looking over a fashion magazine three years old, flushed scarlet and put the paper up before his face, not noticing that almost every other male face in the room had assumed what, under the circumstances, might almost be called "protective coloring."

"Certainly *not*!" Jemima answered and added rather weakly, "not that I think it a question you have any right to ask me, Mr. McQuarg!"

"Well, ma'am, just to be clear, and sence you hev answered—would you marry a man who drank strong liquor?"

"A man who loved me," Jemima murmured, "would be willing to give up alcohol for my sake, I presume."

"Likely . . . likely," drawled McQuarg, and while the faces about him faded to a strong self-sacrificial pallor, he swung one dusty boot across the other and went on, "Now, as to yer attitude towards tobaccy?—smoke and chaw."

Jemima rose and stood flowering vividly from a proud root; then she gathered up her papers, uprooted herself and stepped out of Mrs. Clay's red-hot parlor. As soon as she was safely upstairs the phonograph was turned on and a comic song, in which she felt there must be some impropriety or McQuarg would not so noisily have enjoyed its chorus, racketed through the frame house. In the middle of its third verse something came with a violent thud against her window.

Jemima stood up from her knees—anger at McQuarg had made prayer an instant necessity—and pushed up her sticky pane.

Below stood Barney, who had thrown his glove and now spoke wistfully: "It's real early, Miss Taylor. I was wishing you'd let me show you that pony I was telling you about last week."

Jemima hesitated. In the wide stare of a full moon, Barney in his rancher's best of new blue overalls, beaded boots, yellow shirt and flaring silk handkerchief, was as gorgeous as a passion flower. He needed salvation obviously and bitterly. McQuarg's partner, living day by day under the dissolute eye of an atheist, a mocker, a despiser of women—oh, how the poor boy needed her! Her heart—she thought it was her soul—melted, grew large and quivering and sorrowfully glad.

"I'll be down, Barney," she called in her voice like a wineglass touched ringingly. "I'd adore to see your pony!"

She wrapped her soft brown cape around her and came out, bareheaded, by the back door into the moonlight. Barney and the night and youth made her forgetful of her driving God. Her blood of a martyr was inevitably also the blood of an eager and dissipated lover of life. She was gay and sweet and her eyes warmed. Sometimes the dedication of her soul, renewed weekly with prayers and tears, to McQuarg's reformation, gave her beautiful, almond-shaped eyes a gray and shining splendor which was colder than winter dawn; but not so her resolution to save Barney. The temperature was altogether different and her eyes looked meek and quite unfathomable. Like all saints, she was far more dangerous in her softness than any sinner.

When, several months later, after tears and prayers innumerable, she consented to marry Barney, it was apparently in such a spirit of golden dedication. She refused to let him kiss her until they were man and wife.

"And, oh, Barney," she mourned when she had silenced his timid protests—he was still very much afraid of her—"must McQuarg live with you after we are married?"

"Why, sure! Ain't he my partner? Why, Jem, think of all you can do for him, girl!" By which it may be seen that Barney, even with his fears, was not without a certain artfulness.

Jemima Made Over

She stood drooping, then seemed to gather herself together and held up her head like a lighted taper.

"With God's help!" she said, closed her eyes, opened them and added, "Won't I need it, though!"

Anyone but Barney watching the change from sanctity to vindictiveness in her twenty year old face would certainly have laughed.

Barney looked worship and uneasiness.

The night before she left Glory to follow her husband to his ranch ten miles away, Jemima, at Mrs. Clay's celebrating board, made a last appeal for the modern schoolhouse. She had not given up teaching the dear children of Glory, she said; she hoped to be able to go on with her work next winter. She felt that it was a work entrusted to her, to which she had dedicated herself; that, and the Sunday school. But she did please want them to make a supreme effort to give their children the healthful and civilized surroundings which their promise deserved. They ought to have desks which gave them elbowroom, seats which would not cramp and deform their supple little spines, and light so scientifically distributed that their sensitive young eyes would not suffer. There should be new clean books to replace the dirty, dog-eared, germ-saturated readers and arithmetics.

She left Glory brooding in a cloud of self-reproach, remorse and civic conscientiousness. If this dainty New England scholar had dedicated her flower-like self to the service of their offspring, even to the extent of being willing to ride twenty miles bi-weekly in winter to her duty, then should they not be willing to provide these improvements she demanded? But the cost! The cost! Fathers, yes, and conscientious bachelors, beat at their brains, while mothers, newly awake to the horror of germ existence, gave such looks as are difficult for a sensitive souled man to bear.

Jemima, meanwhile, proud of the disturbance she had wrought in Glory's domestic peace, drove on the high seat of a "white-top" by her bridegroom's side, away and away, slowly, behind the heavy team, from the kindly little dwelling places to that white road which went faring with a desolate pioneer courage out across the loneliness of plain and distant hills. She was, for the first time in her rapt life, afraid of living. She had the feeling of a disembodied creature who, after floating for pure æons in azure space, discovers that he has a body by being crashed against the earth. There went a shattering and grinding sensation through her bones.

On that soft and sappy day of June, a high rare June of snow patches and little ready golden flowers, McQuarg stood waiting, grave and clean and well controlled, in the doorway of their home. The two men had been at tremendous pains to sweep and garnish their abode. They had added to the original three-room shanty a fine, clean, aspen-scented chamber, freshly daubed and chinked, wide-windowed, its board floor washed with sunshine, furnished in bedstead, tables and chairs of peeled logs, and boasting, besides, Jemima's heart's desire, an open fireplace.

For a wedding gift McQuarg had sent as far east as Chicago for a wicker rocking-chair. He had allowed neither Barney nor

himself nor the Airedale terrier to desecrate it. It was, like all rocking-chairs in his mind, sacrosanct to wifehood and maternity. He would have liked to lay a square red shawl smoothly across its back. Jemima pleased him with her pleasure when she came into the room, and especially with the look in her gray, home-loving eyes when she sat down in that rocking-chair of his.

But neither man had realized how the new apartment would contrast with the older portion of the building. Jemima's immediate desire—missionary zeal as usual—was to uplift the old level of living to the new. Therefore she turned everything out of doors, including McQuarg, Barney and the Airedale; she scrubbed and scoured, she swept and beat, she mended, she painted and she inconveniently demanded carpentry. Also, she made war upon the habits of McQuarg. A frenzied longing for the extremity of tidiness was a natural longing of her soul.

Jemima knew that the estate of matrimony was accounted holy, but not all the sacraments of all the priests in Christendom, not any fifteen minutes of churchly abracadabra could undo the

sinister deformation of her mind, consistently shaped through twenty sensitive years, to the effect that a body in itself is unclean, shameful, sinful, that its natural pleasures and experiences are of an evil and secret complexion, and that, though a man may be a beast, a pure woman gives herself coldly like a pearl to swine. So, if Jemima at times was, in spite of her long inhibition, a thrilled and thrilling thrall to her young passion, it must be admitted that at other times, taking vengeance on herself and all mankind, she was something of a Tartar.

And because tenderness for Barney held her hand, she made McQuarg her victim. Causes of persecution were: his dirty-footed—even if she did kiss his nose in corners when nobody saw—dog, the mud from Peter's boots, his odor of the corral, his tobacco, his smelly old pipe, his newspapers, his cigarette ashes, the crumpled bandana handkerchief which always lurked in the corner of any chair which he had just vacated, his fishing tackle and bait, his old cap and mackinaw, the way he ate, his grimed and broken finger nails, the infrequency of his shaving, his need of a new pair of overalls and a sanitary toothbrush, his spitting into the stove.

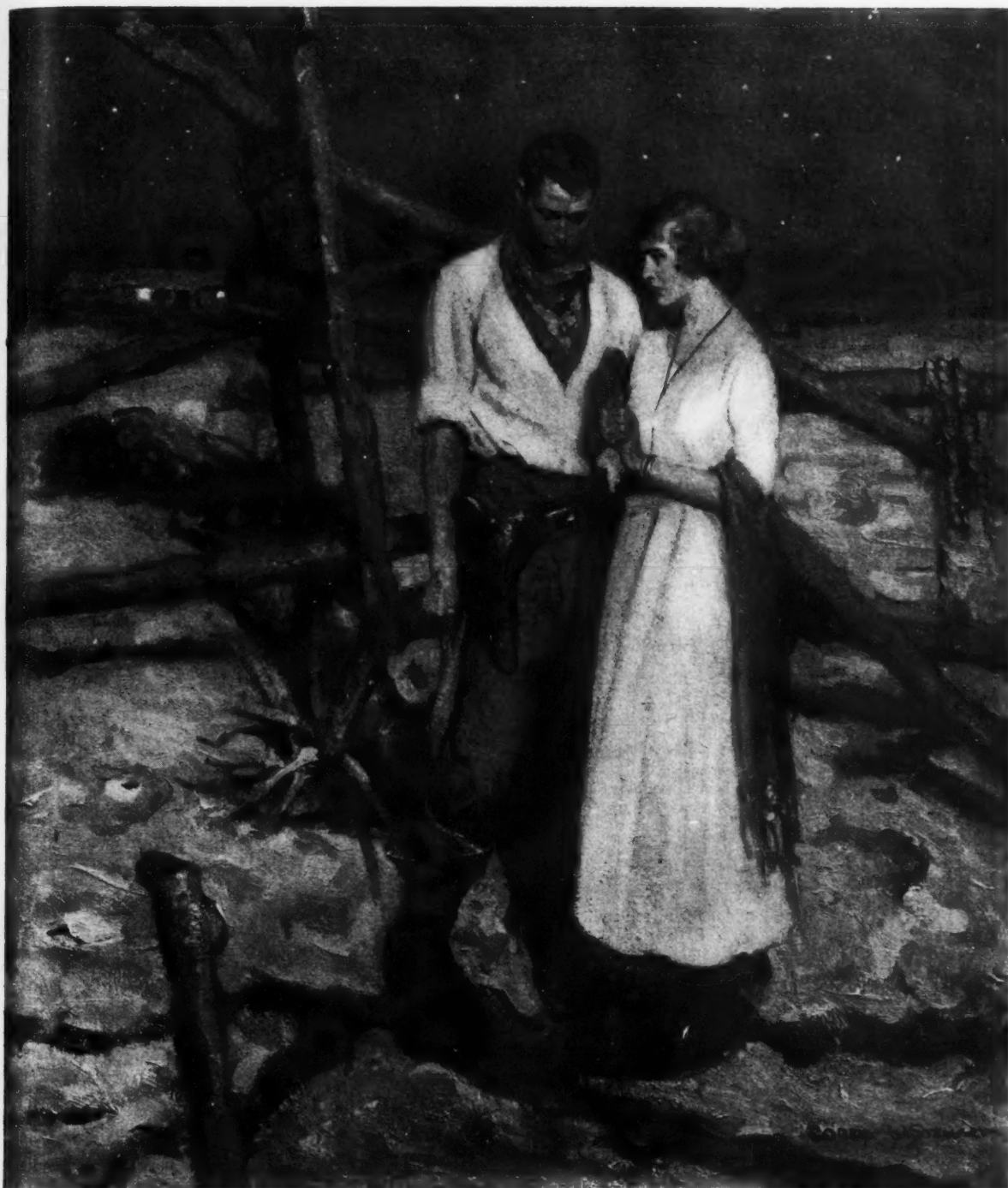
McQuarg was curiously patient. He attempted small reforms. He even bought a brand new doormat and remembered, every now and then, to wipe his feet. He spared Jemima his wit, his laughter and his cynicism; he even curtailed the gorgeous exercise of his gift for satisfying and unusual oaths.

None the less, she contrived still to hate and to fear him. His spiritual conversion limped. He avoided the institution of family prayers. He never opened, she was sure, the Bible she laid upon his table. He did not bend his head for grace, which always caught him unaware with his mouth open for speech or food.

He rode oftener than before into Glory and came back redolent of strong drink and boasting of a gambler's rewards. The beautiful persecution of her eyes, like slender greyhounds, pursued him about this home he loved; they were always cruelly on the scent of his soul.



Jemima hit her man in the boot.



"Oh Barney," cried Jemima, "must McQuarg live with us?" "Why, sure! Ain't he my partner?" said Barney.

For Barney's soul she considered already saved. The man to whom she had sacrificed her spirit's conventionalism must inevitably be saved. Besides, he was still very gentle and timid and obedient. The natural swagger of him, body and mind, had been chastened by his entire devotion. He feared her daytime self because, knowing so well the starry glory of her, he dreaded to frighten it and went softly through the hours in unconditioned surrender to the termagant for fear of losing forever her beautiful, desirous, loose-haired sister. He no longer sang the gaudy songs which so offended her; he chanted the hymns she had taught him.

O what fear man's bosom rendeth
When from Heav'n the Judge descendeth
On whose sentence all dependeth.
Worthless are my prayers and sighing
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying

Rescue me from fires undying.
With Thy favored Sheep, O place me,
Nor among the goats abase me
But to Thy right hand upraise me.
While the wicked are confounded
Doomed to flames and woe unbounded
Call me, with Thy Saints surrounded . . .

Such words she sang, high and sweet and shrill, inside the house, while he outside, within earshot, sang the same words, strong and deep and true. It was a duet beautifully to her liking. Yet all the while a tiny worried corner of her consciousness was occupied by McQuarg, perched like a lean demon on a rail fence by her window, mending rope with his great, clever, labor-gnawed hands, and—oh, how well she knew!—with that terrible half pitying laughter in his deep-set crinkled eyes.

Satan, father of all lesser demons, seemed to have had his eye upon the field of Jemima's evangelical sowing, for no sooner had she turned her back for a summer's absence when oil was found in the flat plains beyond the mountains and Glory became the halfway house for a stream of speculators and prospectors. Some of these were eager, childlike souls eternally in pursuit of rainbow gold; some were desperate followers of a last hope; others were just speculators, recognizable and even familiar; but there were many of a more sinister type, and some of these last, going or coming, lingered as blown rags linger in their untidy journeyings, in Glory, to Glory's soilment. Also, it must be admitted, to Glory's pleasurable excitement.

There was one visitor who so fell in love with the town that he settled into months of occupation of Jemima's vacated Room No. 3 at Mrs. Phil Clay's road house, where he blew cigarette smoke on summer mornings from that little casement from which she had sent up the frosty breath of prayer, and whence he went out to spend his afternoons and nights under Rawle Jones's patronage, initiating the uninitiated and reviving the old thrill of the half forgetful in the delights of faro. Ambrose John was always friendly, smiling and beyond belief entertaining. Unheeded hours could drift over the head of an enchanted listener. He dressed with a sort of splendor, used pomade on his bright hair, waxed his mustachios and showed, when he laughed, teeth as bright as china between his healthful lips. A diamond flashed on his dexterous hand.

On that August night when Barney Griffith rode into town with Peter McQuarg in order to buy Jemima six yards of pink calico, ten yards of toweling and a jar of face cream, the young exile of love and of sanctification found Rawle's saloon a blaze of conviviality and mirth.

Barney had been depressed. He had found out that Jemima didn't like the living room furniture. She had pointed out to him a set of beautiful chairs, a table and a mirrored sideboard in a mail order catalogue: a suite of varnished oak, ornamented with nicely applied repoussé whorls and scallops, which was exactly her ideal. The suite was marked down to \$450. She had smiled with renunciatory sweetness, her face the face of a Peri glimpsing Paradise, and, bending her yellow head over the page, she had looked up with a display of starry eyelashes at her husband, to reassure him. "Of course we can't afford it, darling, but wouldn't it be mar-ve-lous!"

For the first time in a careless, busy and self-sufficient life, Barney had felt the pinch of poverty. He owned a good little hay ranch, to be sure, and he and McQuarg between them could boast now of a tidy herd of cattle, a herd for which they had comfortable winter feed and upon which they were certain this year of a profit. But \$450 was the cost of an entire year's supply of canned goods and was obviously not to be thought of. But oh, how the young husband yearned to make one of the big gestures natural to his generosity and to say, "Sweetheart, these elaborate upholstered chairs, this elephantine table and this sideboard, polished and magnificent, are—yours!"

He came out to his saddled horse—he had been delayed in his farewell to Jem by her absorption in the catalogue—with a bent head and a pinched face, so that McQuarg, mounted and waiting, had stopped abruptly in his whistling.

"Sacred Maria!" he ejaculated. "I must 'a' shed my old pants plumb in the middle of the floor."

"No"—Barney shook his head—"you're not in wrong this time, Peter. It's me. I'm a no-account kind of husband for a girl like Jem."

"Ain't you religious enough for her yet?"

"Religious? Oh, likely I am. But I'd sure like to buy the girl some store furniture."

Peter nursed his bewilderment in silence as they rode.

But Glory, ablaze and vocal, distracted the two ranchmen and the spell of Ambrose John fell dazzlingly upon them so that Jemima's cloud was lifted from their souls. When McQuarg went over to the furnishing store with its abstracted owner and a lantern, to buy six yards of pink calico, ten yards of toweling, and a jar of face cream, he left Barney deep in faro, flushed, a glass at his elbow and many times its contents inside of him. And McQuarg rejoiced.

"It was time that young feller bust loose a bit," he confided to his companion.



That night Ambrose John was like a man inspired. He stood up on his chair and made a speech. He said that the town of Glory had been so almighty good to him that he'd like to do it a service. He said he'd heard that Glory needed an up-to-date schoolhouse. He suggested that half the proceeds of the night's activities, Rawle's and the winners', all and sundry—there being a crowd of oil prospectors in their midst—be dedicated to the building of a schoolhouse worthy of the "best traditions of Old Glory, of which Old Glory might be Glory-ously proud."

His eloquence, his glittering black and white smile, his soft voice and flitting diamond, mounted like a firefly on his gesticulating finger, all cast their spell. Glory, its natives and its visitors, agreed to the proposal and prepared to be magnificent. Rawle's properties flowed and the card tables were overfilled. It was a night of mighty expenditure, not easily to be forgotten.

At dawn the proceeds were counted and divided by the one entirely sober man, Ambrose himself, and presumably the half dedicated to civic improvement was handed over to Honesty Grill for temporary safe-keeping. Honesty was especially reliable in his mild cups; the native guilelessness of his soul blazed like a ruby in his face. He invited Barney to accompany him when he carried the treasure to his home. He wanted to show the boy a newly "mountain head of mounted sheep." The transposition of syllables was unnoticed by Barney, who gravely and gracefully accepted the invitation.

That brief walk across the bare and windy central spaces of Glory between the saloon and Honesty's home was long enough to bring to Barney's consciousness the fact that he was drunk, that he had gamed away the money for the pink calico, the toweling and the face cream, and that Jemima had expected him home before midnight and that it was now very nearly morning. At that, a thousand tons of misery and fear thundered down on his mind and he followed Honesty into his kitchen with the face of the condemned.



Jemima flickered like a straight flame. "I'd as soon touch a poisonous toad—as him," she said with a spurning look.

Honesty put the money entrusted to him into an empty tobacco box and went out to bring in the "mountained sheep" from an outside shed. Before he went, he remarked: "Four hundred and fifty dollars! Four hundred and fifty dollars! That'll sure help Miss Jemima some!"

Barney, tottering to and fro near the table, began to whisper to himself: "Four hundred and fifty dollars! They're going to give her a schoolhouse when what the girl really wants is a set of furniture," and then his liquor-released soul suggested, "What'll she care if I do come home the worse for strong drink if I can say to her as I walk in, 'Girl, here's your set of furniture!'"

Golden light radiated through the inky blackness of his mind. All the weight of remorse, dismay and fear rolled from him. Like a boy who stands in immediate peril of a flogging and is miraculously provided with a convincing excuse, he staggered

with the face of such a happily reprieved culprit across the room, transferred the \$450 from Honesty's box to his own pocket and then sat down, his booted legs sprawled out, his handsome head thrown back, on his lips the smile of a kind deed well done, to wait for Honesty. Vaguely he felt that he ought to explain to his host the transfer of Jemima's money, but the obligation was not weighty enough to trouble his serenity. So he still sat when McQuarg joined him.

"We'd better be getting along towards home, Barney," said McQuarg uneasily.

"Sure had," agreed the boy provided with a good excuse, and amiably but without great physical certainty arose.

They made their excuses to Honesty out in the shed where he was still wrestling with the pale stiff face of the "mountained sheep," and just as Barney collected the words for explanation,

Jemima Made Over

McQuarg pulled him away. "Can't stay here forever jawin'," he remarked.

They went over to their ponies. Barney mounted without the aid of his stirrup and saved himself with exultant laughter from falling off on the other side, and they galloped away under stars all pale and shaken by dawn across the gray sage plain pearly with coming light. Five minutes out of town Barney pulled up and wheeled.

"Peter," he said thickly, "you go on. I'll overtake you. Post office will be open now and I've got to get back. Money order."

McQuarg thought it just as well and rode on alone slowly. He was not, he told himself, especially "suffering with impatience" to see Jemima. There would be time enough, time enough. As he came to the outer ranch gate, Barney, galloping like a devil on a rocking-horse, overtook him, pulled rein and rode his lathered animal more soberly beside his partner's up the home trail. He looked white now and dazed and there were smudges as of burnt cork about his eyes and lips.

"You turn the hosses out, Pete, will you? I want to see Jem—quick!"

Peter, whistling doubtfully the tune of "O what fear man's bosom rendeth," eyed the swaying and stumbling figure as it made its confused way towards the cabin door.

"There will be hell to pay," said McQuarg, and made time with the untying of his cinches.

When at last he opened the door he found himself immediately face to face with Jemima. She was dressed in a wrapper of pale blue flannel, beneath which showed the hem of her long nightgown and the whiter insteps of her slippered feet. Her hair hung down like two thick ears of corn on either side of her face. Between these bands of golden color, she was gray with an extreme disgust. Straight at her feet like a shadow from a taper's foot, lay Barney. He slept noisily and his unconscious face was sodden and discolored. The sun had risen so that a cool, clean red light came through the open windows.

"Yes," said McQuarg, "we both drank more than was good for us and played cards. I carry my liquor better'n Barney. Let's get him to bed, Jemima."

Jemima flickered like a straight flame. She tightened her hands into slender marble fists.

"I'd as soon touch a poisonous toad—as him," she said, and her eyes swept the six feet of relaxed manhood with a spurning look.

McQuarg caught her eyes as they lifted from their castigation of his friend and for an instant held them.

He then put off his hat and coat and went over to Barney. His strength lifted the lumpish weight and supported it into that spotless, aspen-scented bedroom, where he got it into a bed only faintly disturbed by Jemima's half-hour of anxious sleep. After the victim of Glory's hospitality had been tenderly bestowed, McQuarg returned to Jemima. She stood at a window breathing deep breaths of giddy mountain air and staring at the untainted sky.

"You can go to him now," said McQuarg coldly; "he's pretty near good enough now to be looked at by his wife."

Jemima turned, came across the room and gathered herself together into one of the big log and rawhide chairs. She pulled up over her a coyote skin and resolutely closed her eyes.

"I will sleep here," she said, "until it's time to get breakfast. My bedroom is no better than a beast's den."

McQuarg's face, grim and pale, flamed redder than the day. "Do you love my partner, Barney, Jem?" he asked.

"Not that Barney." Her lips spurned his name as her eyes had spurned his unconscious body.

"Well," said McQuarg and pointed to the door, "this is his home and the home of them that loves him, bad or good, drunk or sober, in Heaven or in Hell, uplifted or forsaken by Almighty God—like I do. What's love if it ain't more'n one-half loyalty and forgiveness?"

"He is a drunkard and a coward," Jemima answered, white-hot as her faith, and sitting up straight to face him. "He tried to buy my forgiveness with a lying gift. He said that he had made four hundred and fifty dollars at the gaming table and that he had sent a mail order for a suite of furniture. Then he asked me for a kiss!" She sobbed once.

But McQuarg had suddenly forgotten to be angry. The signals of his rage had been wiped entirely from his face.

"Four hundred and fifty dollars! Great guns! Honesty had just that amount of cash. Barney went back to send a mail order. Four hundred and fifty dollars! The boy gets clean out of his sense of what's his and what's your'n when he's good and drunk."

McQuarg's lips were drawn and his eyes scorched with dread of something. He went in and began a brutal and determined rousing of the stupefied man. After a half-hour of deliberately inflicted torment he came out to Jemima, whiter than she.

"Jem," he said, "Barney was clean out of his head. He took four hundred and fifty dollars from Grill's tobacco box and sent it off to buy your furniture. By now likely Honesty has missed the fund—it was to help towards the new schoolhouse. Glory is full of dangerous hoboos this morning and even its own folks won't be in a nice frame of mind if they're roused early after last night. Barney and I are the only men they can suspect. We was both at Grill's house. Barney showed his hand at the post office when he sent that money order. What in hell can we do?"

"What—in hell!" she muttered with a detached and dreadful bitterness.

"He's got to get on a horse and ride over to Gramer's and collect that money Gramer owes me. It's money he's had under his hand, as I asked him, to be delivered without question or delay at my demand. I'll write to him. If Barney's quick and if we can hold up any that comes to ask questions, he can just about make it and save his skin."

"He can't stand or walk, how can he ride?" she asked with the same impersonal and scornful aloofness.

"He's got to," McQuarg went in again. From behind the door came moans and enforced footsteps. At last Barney appeared, death-gray, his eyes wet and dazed with pain and weeping. He was fully dressed. Without looking at Jemima he stumbled past her and McQuarg presently had him on a horse. Unwillingly Jemima watched him ride past her window, sitting low in his saddle, bent forward like a man in pain.

McQuarg returned. He held himself quiet and taut like a listener. He did not look at Jemima again and she began to feel a queer sensation of disembodiment as though she had altogether ceased to exist.

"Ah!" said McQuarg sharply after a time of dreadful silence, and stood up. "Go into your room, girl, and stay there!"

As she rose she too heard the mad thudding of hard-driven hoofs. She obeyed him slowly.

McQuarg went out and stood before his door.

He had been right in his summation of the mood of Glory. These riders, half a dozen or so, who tumbled from their saddles and ran across his sage, were an advance guard of picked rascals who had galloped ahead of a more measured justice so that they could indulge their secret appetite for violence, cruelty and power. They demanded harshly:

"Where's Barney Griffith? We want a thief. And we want four hundred and fifty dollars."

McQuarg, standing at ease a little above them by his door, smiled down. "Sorry, boys, I haven't the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars in the house, and Barney is asleep."

"All right. You let us go in and wake him up. We want to see your partner, feller!"

"If anyone wants to see my partner in that tone of voice, he's got to hev a sheriff's warrant."

"To blazes with warrants! We forked out four hundred and fifty dollars' worth of charity and we ain't figgerin' to give the spendin' of it to Barney Griffith. We know he took it, man. The dern fool went and handed in the exact amount at the post office and sent a mail order."

"Hold up the mail stage then, why don't you?" McQuarg suggested.

"Oh, we ain't worryin'! We'll get the cash all right. But we're figgerin' on gettin' the thief, savvy?"

"Well, keep right on figgerin'. If you meet the sheriff on your way back to Glory, tell him if he rides quick he'll be in time to have his breakfast with us."

And McQuarg turned to go in at his door.

At this, one of the strangers, unsteady and blear-eyed, pulled out his six-shooter. The bullet stung the tip of McQuarg's left ear and made a hole in the door. He spun in swiftly, slammed it, locked it, and shouting, "Lay down on the floor, Jem!" he proceeded to clap to the heavy winter shutters of solid wood. When he had finished he found Jemima, fully dressed, standing beside him.

"There's a big square hole in one of the shutters," she said, "where Barney was going to nail a new board."

"Yes, ma'am. We got to close it."

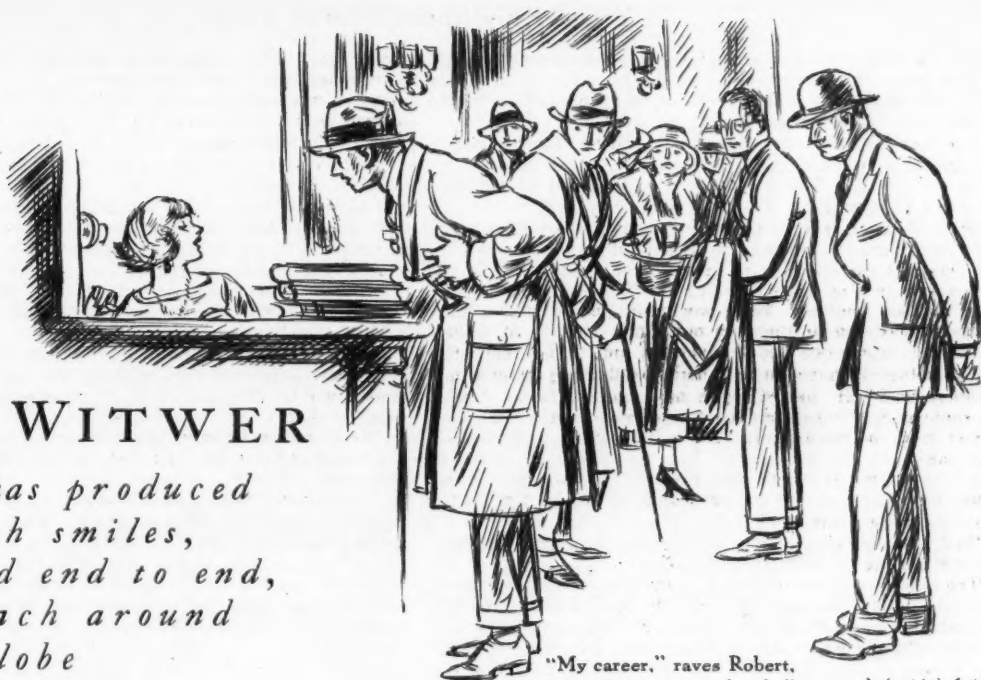
Jemima put a thoughtful finger against her dimple.

"I've seen something just the right size and shape," she meditated, went swiftly in and out, and fitted her Book of Sermons into the open place. It filled (Continued on page 112)

By

H. C. WITWER

*who has produced
enough smiles,
placed end to end,
to reach around
the globe*



"My career," raves Robert,
"rests in your pretty hands."

W. MORGAN

When Knighthood Was in Tower

Illustrations by Wallace Morgan

A HUNDRED and fifty years ago, the late Mr. Samuel Johnson yawned, picked up his pen, jabbed it in the nearest inkwell and dashed off the following nifty:

"No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money!"

Now, really, with plenty of due respect for the deceased, I'm compelled to remark that in my opinion the above wise crack is the ant's smoking jacket. I admit that I have yet to stumble across a writer who made it a habit never to take any doubloons for his stuff, but I *do* know a milk-fed author who says it with plays and who doesn't give a good gosh darn whether he gets pennies for 'em or not, as long as he gets his concoctions produced with his name on 'em. My boy friend, Guy Austin Tower, is an incurable addict of that habit-forming drug, Fame, and he'd rather have three cheers than three dollars. Oh, yes, I forgot to mention that this master mind is a full-blooded millionaire and that *does* make a difference, now doesn't it?

Mr. Tower's first play is still running on Broadway and if it isn't a success then neither is Henry Ford. Getting a seat in Heaven and getting a seat in the show shop where Mr. Tower's riot is on view are two feats of equal difficulty, and judging by the lines outside the box office there's the same number of people trying to get into both places. I have a season pass—to the theater, not Heaven—and can go as often as I can stand it. That's very nice, but what I *should* be clicking off is a large slice of the weekly loot, because if it hadn't been for *me* there wouldn't have been any play!

In case my face isn't familiar, I'm a telephone operator at the hotel St. Moe and one of the girls the Prince of Wales *didn't* dance with when he was seeing America thirst. The other girl who missed a one-step with His Highness can't get nobody to believe her. I was baptized Mary Johnson by poor but Irish parents and after winning first, second and third prize in a beauty tournament at Bountiful, Utah, I changed my name to Gladys Murgatroyd and descended on the movies.

Not so good! It didn't take me long to discover that Hollywood is a place where many are stalled and few are chosen, so I fled to Manhattan and while waiting for something better I

accepted this portfolio on the St. Moe switchboard. Not much money, but lots of laughs.

Like all little girls which are not painful to the eye I get most of my innocent merriment from the wronger sex and I'm perfectly parked to watch their dizzy antics as they swarm around my switchboard, trying to get numbers—and me. But I'm generally a dead wire as far as the boys are concerned, giving 'em all nothing in the line of encouragement. I either smile and stall 'em or steam and bawl 'em, according to their method of approach. Being marooned on the island of New York, I have learned that I've got to be circumspect to avoid disrespect. Say—long ago I got fed up on getting out to walk from autos whose exceedingly disappointed owners in that way discovered they were poor guessers. Still, as France remarks to Germany, it's all fun!

Occasionally, however, this being alone gets much more monotonous than monotony itself. Going to movies and shows with Hazel Killian, my girl friend, is not very thrilling to a refugee from Hollywood, which Heaven knows is just Sleepy Hollow, but there *is* a kick in living in a place which everybody east of Albuquerque thinks would goal Nero. Then again, I'm wild about dancing and know how it's done, so there are times when I cast a speculative eye over the field and choose some safe and sane male, neither too old nor too bold, who I can ruin a few hours with when off duty and yet be able to look back to the excursion later with nothing more than a smile.

In that way I have twice broken my own rule and bounded around to perfectly proper places with boys. In both cases my merry men happened to be in a jam and little Gladys dried their tears and came to bat with some scheme that solved their problem. The first patient, Julius De Haven, who I helped get from the chorus of a musical comedy to stardom, urgently desired to commit matrimony with me as his accomplice. But, honestly, marriage is the furthest thing from my thoughts. I suppose wedding bells are as good a way as any to wind up a romance; still I've listened in at my switchboard to too many phone conversations between man and wife to want to be a ball and chain on any male, or versa vice. My second experiment was

When Knighthood Was in Tower

Hurricane Sherlock, a gentleman who made his living by assault and battery. He was light-heavyweight champion of terra firma and I was beginning to like him when he introduced me to one of his relatives by marriage—viz., his wife.

My next imitation was Guy Austin Tower, the millionaire playwright who I made a knight for a day. Let's go!

At the time Mr. Tower crossed my path I had just finished reading a story entitled "When Knighthood Was in Flower" by Charles Major, and really Charley manipulated a wicked set of writing implements, no fooling! Often I'd close my eyes over that book at the switchboard and imagine I was living in the romantical days of old like the kind Charles wrote about and then I'd gaze around at the leering lounge lizards and smirking lobby hounds who jam the gorgeous corridors of the St. Moe—hunting in packs like the wolves they are!—and believe me, I'd come back to earth with a thump! Many and many a time I've wished I had been current when gleaming blades flashed in the sun for a lady's smile and when a perfumed glove, tossed from a balcony, was ample to start a revolution, a duel, an empire or a scandal. But now that's all as out of order as a suit of white ducks would be in a coal mine. These days, men start wars for dollars and fight for women with the same weapons.

Well, I was in this silly, sentimental frame of mind when along came Mr. Tower, and then the fun began!

The meeting was very scenario. I overslept one morning after going to a ball the night before with Hazel Killian. Hazel's a great drawing room favorite, that is, she poses in studios, and as all the other girls worked at the same gift, why, it really was a very model ball, wasn't it? Don't bother with that one if it's too difficult. Anyhow, on this morning which was to have so little effect on my future, I was afraid I'd be late at the mill so I blew myself to a taxi. About halfway to the St. Moe, the motor quit like a dog and after my fearful looking chauffeur had leisurely potted around it and tried without luck to start it with curses alone, I impatiently commanded him to get me another and less shopworn bus. Time and tide not only waits for no man, but it waits for no woman either and I was frantic to get on the job.

"Hey, quit that hollerin' at me!" says the chauffeur politely. "I'm doin' the best I kin, ain't I? I'll git you downtown in

good time. They seems to be somethin' the matter with the carburetor, but I ain't sure if—"

"You're a fine automobile mechanic!" I interrupt, with equal courtesy. "I bet you think a wrist pin is jewelry. It's taken you nearly fifteen minutes to go three miles!"

"Who d'ye wish to drive you for a buck and a half—Barney Oldfield?" he sneers.

"Listen!" I says. "I'm not going to do an act with you, so save that cross-fire patter for the garage. Call me a taxi with a motor in it and make it snappy!"

The chauffeur scowls at me.

"You certainly like to arg, don't you?" he says. "All right, I'll git you a cab. Gimme the one fifty what's on the clock for haulin' you this far."

I reached in my hand bag and then, honestly, I thought I'd swoon! In my mad rush to get out of my apartment and down to the hotel I had forgotten my purse—can you imagine that?

"I—it seems I have left my money at home," I began to stammer, my face as red as his ungainly nose. "If you—"

"Apple sauce!" butts in this charming gentleman of the old school. "Don't try to kid me, cutey. That stuff might git you by in them out of town slabs, but I was born and dragged up on Second Avenoo and I have met you gyppers before! I wouldn't care if you was so good lookin' you'd make a gold fish forgit to keep openin' and closin' its mouth, I'm blonde-proof. You don't shove off from here till I git my jack and that's that!"

Ain't we got fun?

Well, an interested knot of innocent bystanders begins to rally round us and this modern Sir Galahad squawks his head off till, really, I never was so mortified since I first tried roller skating. I have met some hard-boiled citizens in tripping gaily along life's promenade, but Mr. Taxi Driver was a china egg if there ever was one! No give to him at all and the more I pleaded with him the more abusive he became and the more the shipping clerks, bootleggers, pickpockets and floorwalkers on their way to business seemed to enjoy it. Honestly, it was horrible!

At this critical moment along comes Mr. Guy Austin Tower, Esq., in his costly imported horseless carriage, built along racing lines to hold two people—if they're kind of affectionate friends. Mr. Tower leaps lightly and gracefully out of his car, shoulders his way to my taxi and raises his cap with the air of two Valentinos.

"As I live!" he remarks with a bright smile. "The Goddess of the Switchboard! May I be of service?"

Not even his mother will ever be any gladder to see him than I was right then! I remembered him instantly as my wealthy admirer who is parked in the royal suite on the tenth floor of the St. Moe—two hundred dollars the day, but then you get a lovely view of Central Park.

I made him a present of the smile that had no little to do with me winning that beauty contest, and reading the immediate effect in his eyes I felt more at ease right away.

"Thank you!" I says. "I left my purse at home and—"

"Blah!" the taxi apache shuts me off. "What d'ye wanna tell this cake eater that stuff for? Ask him to slip you the buck and a half you owe me, he looks dizzy enough to fall for it!"

Mr. Tower certainly was light on his feet for a big man and he acted promptly, as all first-class knights do. His arm shot out from his shoulder and down flopped friend chauffeur as if he'd been shot through the heart. A round of applause went up from the delighted spectators, just as a burly policeman pushed his way through the throng.

The cop looks at me and I'm trembling with fear, he stares curiously at the prostrate chauffeur who won't be any more still when he's dead, he gazes around at the grinning witnesses, and then he turns to the flushed Mr. Tower, who's standing there blowing softly on his skinned knuckles.

"Hey, what's all the excitement here, heh?" growls the gendarme.

Mr. Tower smiles cheerfully and pats John Law on the arm.

"Eh—just taking a movie!" he says pleasantly.



Going to shows with my girl friend is not very thrilling to a refugee from Hollywood.



"Hey, what's all the excitement here?" growls the cop. "Just taking a movie," says Mr. Tower pleasantly.

"Move along and give these people a chance to see what they're doin'!" bawls the cop to the laughing crowd as Mr. Tower hands me into his car with so much grace, that I could close my eyes and see him standing there in silken doublet and hose and hear him say, "I prithee, fair lady, wouldst step in yon equipage?"

I don't know what the name of Mr. Tower's car was, but I think it must have been a Leaping Tuna from the way it carried on when we hit bumps and crossings en route to the St. Moe. I promised to go to dinner with him at my earliest convenience, too, because by this time I was up to my neck in romance and I thought my millionaire cavalier was the gnat's bathrobe!

Enter Robert Meacham Westover, playwright number two.

Robert was writing dramas for such producers as the Shuberts, A. H. Woods, Dillingham, Savage, Brady, Morosco and Lederer. He wrote for them all, yet unfortunately none of them gave his plays a tumble. Like Mr. Tower, Robert was young and comely, but he was also an incurable pauper and the other girls on the board liked him and carboled the same way. Really, he was a fearful pest, hanging around the switchboard all day and asking over and over again, "Are you *sure* there were no calls for me

today?" or "There *must* have been a phone call for me—I have a play being considered by Klaw and Erlanger, and—" etc. But there were no more calls for Robert Meacham Westover than there are calls for hot water bags in Hades.

Personally, I was very sorry for Robert, who looked like he never had a good time in his life. Every day and in every way he kept getting thinner and thinner, till he resembled a model for a "Help the Starving Kanakas!" poster, or something similar, honestly! I knew he didn't have a dime in the wide wide world and I often wondered how he managed to live. I even had a hazy idea of taking him out and feeding him some day as a simple act of charity, but of course a girl has to be careful mothering strange young men in New York—or anywhere else, for that matter. Look at the jam Eve got herself into by feeding Adam that apple!

It was Jerry Murphy who made up my mind for me regarding Robert. Jerry is the house detective at the St. Moe, a wild admirer of mine and about as useful as a toothbrush would be to a hen. He looks like a mock turtle and don't know what it's all about and every time he gets a chance he moors himself at the switchboard, gazing at me like a man on a raft in the

middle of the Atlantic would view the approach of the Aquitania. This gives the other girls plenty giggles, but Jerry's a good scout even if he is a total loss and I'm very lenient with him. However, one day he loomed up over the board just as Robert Meacham Westover had walked away.

"What's 'at clown pesterin' you about now?" growls Jerry, jerking a pudgy thumb over his shoulder at Robert's threadbare back.

"Are you my father?" I says, haughtily working the plugs.

"No," admits Jerry, "but they's a movie by 'at name right across the street. Listen, has 'at guy Westover been annoyin' you?"

"No," I says. "You do all that! What right have you got to question me about my friends? Run along and play, when I wish your services I'll whistle. Go on, sho—'you're on a busy wire!"

"Somebody must of put in a rap for me," says Jerry mournfully. "Seems to me you're *always* busy when I give you a ball, but 'at Westover mug can buzz you all day long and make you like it! Why show *him* any favors? He's been tryin' to promote you now since—"

"That's out!" I shut him off. "Don't get out of line, Jerry, or I won't let you talk to me at all. Besides, I don't believe Mr. Westover is even interested in women—he's too busy wiring plays."

"Blah!" snorts Jerry scornfully. "Show me a guy which can't get no kick out of you and I'll show you a place in the East River where it's nothing but consommé! If 'at scissor-billed boloney ever tries to make a date with you I'll lay him like a carpet. I'm goin' to bear down on him anyways. He gets checked out of this trap tonight, or else—"

"Or else he don't!" I finish for him. "Look here, Jerry, I don't need a guardian and if you ever start a disturbance around here on my account I'll make you so sorry you'll sob yourself sick! Understand?"

"Don't get red-headed," says Jerry soothingly. "I ain't goin' to cuff him, but I got orders to *pinch* him. Laugh *that* off!"

"Arrest Mr. Westover?" I says, and I'm so startled I gave two people their right numbers. "What for?"

"He's got a hobby of not payin' his rent," says Jerry. "The big stiff! So he writes plays, hey? Well, six months on the island ought to give him plenty ideas for his next comedy!"

Then I saw Jerry was serious, so I got serious, too. Somehow the idea of this starving kid being thrown in the Bastille didn't appeal to me. No matter what anybody says, I have never believed that a writer does his best work when the world's against him. Why, six months in a cell might ruin that boy's entire future and prevent the world from meeting another Avery Hopwood! So I manage to smile and flirt Jerry Murphy into keeping his hands off Robert Meacham Westover till I had interviewed the young man and got a line on where, if anywhere, he expected to turn for some pieces of eight.

That very night as I was going out to dinner I ran across Robert standing in front of the big plate glass window of the Café les Infants, watching the chef juggling wheat cakes. Some of the numbing chill of New York's regard for a loser has crept into the air itself and Robert's coat collar is turned up, his hands are in his pockets, and in his eyes, glued on the golden brown wheat cakes, is a look of longing such as probably Cleopatra saw when Mark Antony first gave her the

up and down. Just saying it was pathetic is not doing the scene justice. He started, kind of guilty, when he pegged me, but I grabbed his arm.

"Greetings!" I says smilingly. "Speaking of Lake Erie, come on, I'm going to feed you!"

Yes, men can blush.

"Why—I—why—eh—really, I'm not hungry," he stammers, but how his eyes did glint at the mention of food! "I—"

But by this time I have crowded him inside and seated him at a table, where his protests got weaker and weaker. One glance at the line of march and he simply ordered everything on it and a pot of coffee. However, he insisted upon paying for his dinner and mine—borrowing ten dollars from me for this worthy purpose. Robert carefully marked down the loan on the back of a letter rejecting one of his plays, with the solemn promise that when his first drama was accepted he would repay me about two thousand percent. Tomato sauce! I waited till he had finished giving his one man banquet a beating and then I took him in hand.

"What's the idea of storing yourself in the best hotel in Gotham when you have no visible and apparently no invisible means of support?" I ask him, over the cheese and crackers.

Robert turns a rosy red.

"I imagine that *must* look a bit odd," he says. "But allow me to call your attention to the fact that I'm occupying the cheapest room in the—eh—hostelry, and I must have a good address to get even casual attention from the theatrical producers."

"Listen," I says quietly. "As long as you have failed to set the lake ablaze as a playwright, are in debt and have no more idea than a rabbit where you're going to promote any money, why not forget about the hard hearted theatrical producers and go to work?"

Robert's knife clatters to the table and his mouth opens wide. In his eyes is a look of genuine amazement. Then he smiles.

"You're joking," he says calmly.

I gaze at him, coolly sitting there eating the food I have paid for and grinning at the idea of earning his living, and honestly I get burnt up!

"You see something comical in the idea of getting a job?" I ask him, in a kind of strained voice.

"Naturally!" he answers, packing some more cheese on a cracker. "My dear girl, I wouldn't even know how to go about it! What would I do, for instance?"

"What would you do?" I says angrily.

"Why, *anything*! Drive a truck, dig streets, sell books, learn a trade of some kind or enlist on the police force! Get up early in the morning, study the want ads and then lay out a route for yourself, taking the first job that's offered you! Why—"

"I'm afraid you don't understand," butts in Robert, with coldly raised eyebrows. "I'm an artist—not a laborer!"

"I wouldn't brag about it!" I says. "Do you mean to say you have never done a day's work in your life?"

"I was at one time engaged in the work of bringing men's and women's attention to the fact that this life is not eternal—that death must come to us all!" says Robert. "And—"

"You were a minister?" I interrupt, full of surprise.

"No," says Robert. "An insurance agent."



Money had not prevented Mr. Tower from solving the mysteries of dancing. Really he glided a wicked ballroom:

Well, we sat there and argued till I was plenty late when I went back to my board. Honestly, I rode Mr. Robert Meacham Westover to a fare-thee-well in an attempt to make him snap into it. He broke out with an attack of temperament and angry words flew back and forth like swallows, till finally he threw up his hands and promised me faithfully that if his latest masterpiece, "An Illegal Crime," wasn't accepted within a week he'd return to the respectable science of selling life insurance, as he was doing when what he called the "divine afflatus" knocked him for a loop.

The very next day Robert gave me a copy of "An Illegal Crime" to read and I took it home with me when I went off duty that night. I must admit I didn't expect to get much of a kick out of it, but I thought I'd at least glance through it, so that when Robert crossexamined me about this drama, I'd know how many acts was in it, if nothing else.

Well, really, I don't know when I got such a surprise! From the minute I started to read "An Illegal Crime" I simply couldn't lay it down, and it was nearly four A. M. when I turned out the light at the indignant request of Hazel Killian. I had read every word of Robert's play and some of it twice, and if it wasn't a knockout then I'm Queen of Sheba!

Two days later I kept my dinner engagement with Guy Austin Tower.

If I'd been going to get married I couldn't have donated more time to dolling myself up than I did on the day of this date. The first thing I did was to phone Mr. Williams, manager of the St. Moe, another male who fancies himself highly. If I had a dollar for every time this dizzy dumbbell has tried to take me out, he'd never be in a position to invite me again! I told him I was sick and couldn't report and he says I should try Doc Cooney's system, because all ills are only imaginary. So I sweetly said that in that case he could imagine I was there and then I hung up. My next move is to drop in at a beauty parlor and let the skilled labor there have a field day. I had my hair waved, my nails done, my classic features massaged, sat for a troubled hour with my face caked in mud, etc., etc., and even etc. When I came out I was all in, but I was also a success!

I have exactly one evening gown. Buying it swept away my lifetime savings and made Hazel Killian hysterical laughing at what she called my maniacal extravagance. I don't consider getting this dear of a dress was extravagance! Looking at it, wearing it, even touching it, gives me more joy than I can tell you. I just love it. If I had a million dollars I'd have \$975,000 worth of clothes! This one is pink satin covered with crystals, wrapped tightly around the figure towards the front, where the draperies are fastened with large ornaments of silver leaves and buds. It's a rather daring gown and not everybody could wear it, but I didn't win that Utah beauty contest because the judges were nearsighted!

Mr. Tower called for me at seven and the look he gave me as his face changed color when I opened the door repaid me with illegal interest for my preparations. In dinner clothes, he was very restful to the eye himself. In fact, the openly envious Hazel thought my knight had stepped right off the screen and she told me later she got such a reaction that she deliberately broke a date with a boy poet from Greenwich Village and went out with a dashing young peddler of automobiles instead, simply because the latter sheik had a pleasing habit of wearing a tuxedo of nights.



Every day and in every way Robert kept getting thinner and thinner.

Well, Mr. Tower and I had dinner at Jonquin's, the Polo Grounds of the restaurant league, and he seemed as proud of me as if he'd won me at golf. We talked about this and we talked about that and then, of course, the conversation got personal. I soon found out that Mr. Tower, who had nothing but money, was as temperamental as Mr. Westover, who had nothing but nerve. My millionaire is dissatisfied with things in general. Although his father left him about everything but South Dakota when he died, Mr. Tower says he wants to make good—that is, he craves fame. A moment afterwards when he confesses that he's an author and playwright, I nearly choked.

"What's the matter?" he asks me anxiously.

"Nothing," I says. "I—well, I seem to be in the midst of an epidemic of writers! I had dinner with one only the other day, Robert Meacham Westover. He lives at the St. Moe, too—do you know him?"

"No, I don't believe I do," says Mr. Tower thoughtfully. "But if his plays have been produced, I envy him!"

"Save your envy," I says. "What plays have you had produced, Mr. Tower?" I started something.

"None!" he says, banging the table with his fist. "And I or any other unknown playwright never will have his work produced while conditions in the theatrical business remain as they are. Genius is strangled, sacrificed to the god of the box office! Originality is penalized and becomes a serious handicap—art is symbolized by the lady on the face of the dollar!"

"In other words, it's all wrong," I says, feeling I should say something.

"Exactly," says Mr. Tower. "How quick you are to grasp one's meaning and how wonderfully sympathetic!"

"It's a gift!" I says demurely. "Like being able to wiggle your ears or play the oboe."

"By Jove, that's clever!" says Mr. Tower. "I shall put that in my next story. Have I your permission?"

"Go right ahead," I says. "Don't hesitate to call on me at any time. So you write stories, too? I suppose you're what they call ambidextrous, aren't you?"

Mr. Tower throws back his head and laughs like a kid.

"Now you're joshing me!" he says, wagging a reproachful finger at me. "Write stories? My dear girl, under various nom de plumes I have submitted verse, essays, short and long stories, jokes, epigrams, plays and what not to producers and publishers, but thus far I have failed to ring the bell. I have been told by competent authorities that my style and technic—the result of much study and training—leave (Continued on page 118)

MEREDITH

The Hope of Happiness

Illustrations by
Pruett Carter



Millicent Harden

The Setting of the story is a Mid-west city today, and it concerns the lives of:

BRUCE STORRS, a young architect of fine personal character whose mother has told him on her deathbed that he is not the son of her husband.

FRANKLIN MILLS, his real father, an aristocratic widower from an old family, rich, conservative, influential, domineering, and little understood by his fellow citizens.

SHEPHERD MILLS, Franklin's son, placed at the head of a storage battery plant by his father; a dreamer whose character is the antithesis of Franklin's.

CONSTANCE MILLS, Shepherd's wife, a social parvenu, restless and avid of personal admiration, rather disliked by her father-in-law.

LEILA MILLS, Franklin's daughter and favorite, charming but just now inclined to run wild.

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MILLICENT HARDEN, a close friend of Leila's who has beauty, poise and artistic genius.

"BUD" HENDERSON, an old college friend of Bruce's.

"BILL" FREEMAN, a prominent architect.

DALE FREEMAN, his wife, whose home is the rendezvous for an intelligent social set.

MRS. TORRENCE, a widow, and delightful.

A Résumé of Parts One to Three:

THE confession of his mother's one lapse in a faithful married life is a great shock to Bruce Storrs. At her dying request, Bruce goes to the Mid-west city where Mills lives to be near his unknown father.

There, keeping his secret closely guarded, he secures work as assistant to Freeman, and through Bud Henderson meets the city's "best people"—including his own family, the Millses. Indeed, some impish fate seems from this time on to be constantly dragging him into contact with the house of Mills.

For instance, twice he rescues Leila from difficult situations when she is a little the worse for drink—once taking her from a stalled motorboat, once driving her home from Mrs. Torrence's. As for Constance Mills, each time he sees her she engages him in confidential chats that have all the earmarks of flirtation. And Shepherd Mills wants him to design a clubhouse for his workmen, until his father summarily refuses to sanction the scheme; even then, when his wife urges him to go ahead without his father's approval, Shepherd plans to consult Bruce again.

But the more serious contact is that between Bruce and his father. Bruce is attracted to Millicent Harden, though he has called on her only once and once played golf with her. He senses that Franklin Mills also may be in love with Millicent; indeed, his father is at Millicent's the night he calls.

The whole situation is wearing on Bruce's nerves. He finds himself growing frequently moody. Everywhere he turns, he runs into a Mills. He begins almost to dislike his father.

Franklin Mills too is beginning to be perturbed by this situation. And he strongly suspects that Bruce is his own son; a suspicion that nears certainty when he sees the astonishing resemblance Bruce bears to a portrait of his, Franklin's, father. Does Bruce, he wonders, recalling that brief romance of

NICHOLSON'S

Vital Novel of American Life



Franklin Mills

long ago, know of this relationship?

The question comes home to him with especial keenness one night after a dinner party when he has been talking casually to Leila about Storrs. Alone with the portrait of his father, his meditations become intolerable.

Part Four: CHAPTER VI

THE morning after his dinner party Franklin Mills rose at eight o'clock. He had slept badly, an unusual thing with him, and he found little satisfaction in an attempt to account for his wakefulness on the score of something he had eaten. As he shaved he found that he was not performing the familiar rite automatically as usual. He tried a succession of blades and became impatient when they failed to work with their usual smoothness. He attained a degree of buoyancy as he dressed by thinking of his immunity from the cares that beset most men. No other man in town enjoyed anything like his freedom. He had not dreaded age because he never thought of himself as old. And yet the years were passing . . .

He must study means of deferring old age. Marriage might serve to retard the march of time. The possibility of remarrying had frequently of late teased his imagination. Leila would leave him one of these days; he must have a care that she married well. Mills had plans for Carroll's future; Carroll would be a most acceptable son-in-law . . . Leila had so far shown no interest in Carroll, but Leila had the Mills common sense; when it came to marrying, Leila would listen to reason.

He called his man to serve breakfast in his room, read the morning paper, inspected his wardrobe and indicated several suits to be pressed.

From his south window he viewed the Harden house across the hedge. Millicent was somewhere within . . . It might be a mistake to marry a girl as young as Millicent. He knew of men who had made that mistake, but Millicent was not to be measured by ordinary standards. With all the charm of youth, she was amazingly mature; not a feather-brained girl who would marry him for his money. There was the question of her family, her lack of social background; but possibly he magnified the

importance of such things. His own standing, he argued, gave him certain rights.

Delay might be hazardous; he began thinking of the young men who had been attentive to Millicent. Most of them were of Leila's set; he had no very good opinion of any of them. And there was Storrs, who had so unaccountably projected himself into the scene. Storrs was young, handsome, with an artistic nature to which Millicent, with her own endowments and tastes, might easily respond . . .

The remembrance of the young architect's head superimposed upon the portrait of Franklin Mills III caused him an uneasiness which he was not able to dispel by a snap of the fingers. If Storrs boldly confronted him and asserted a claim upon his bounty the thing could be dealt with on a strictly business basis; but there was no reason for suspecting that he meditated blackmail. Possibly the young man himself was unaware that there might be a doubt as to his parentage; but how was he, Franklin Mills, to satisfy himself on this point? Any attempt to learn what had prompted Storrs to choose for his residence the city so long sacred to the Mills family might easily arouse suspicion.

The portrait in itself was a menace. People were such fools about noting resemblances! If his sisters met Storrs they might remark upon his resemblance to their father. And yet they were just as likely to note the removal of the picture if he relegated it to the attic.

By the time he had interviewed the house servants and driven to the office Mills had passed through various moods ranging from his habitual serenity and poise to apprehension and foreboding. This puzzled him. Why should he, the most equable of men, suddenly fall a prey to moods? He put on a pair of library glasses that he kept in his desk, though he usually employed a pince-nez at the office—a departure which puzzled Carroll, who did not know that Mills, in the deep preoccupation of the morning, had left his pocket case at home. Mills, in normal circumstances, was not given to forgetfulness. Aware that something was amiss, Carroll made necessary reports and suggestions with more than his usual economy of words.

"Doctor Lindley telephoned that he'd be in to see you at eleven. You have no engagements and I told him all right."

"Lindley? What does Lindley want?" Mills demanded.

"He didn't say, sir, but as you always see him—"

"I don't know that I care to see him today," Mills mumbled. Mills rarely mumbled; his speech was always clean-cut.

Carroll, listening attentively to his employer's instructions as to answering letters and sending telegraphic orders for the sale of certain stocks, speculated as to what had caused Mills's unwanted irascibility. A few minutes after eleven word was passed from the office boy to the stenographer and thence from Carroll to Mills that the Reverend Doctor Lindley was waiting.

Mills detained Carroll rather unnecessarily to discuss matters of no immediate moment. This in itself was surprising, as the rector of St. Barnabas, the oldest and richest church in town, had heretofore always been admitted without delay. The Mills family had been identified with St. Barnabas from earliest times and Doctor Lindley was entertained frequently by Mills not only at home but at the men's luncheons Mills gave at his clubs for visiting notables.

"Ah, Mills! Hard at it!" exclaimed the minister cheerfully. He was short, rotund and bald, with a large face that radiated good nature. A reputation for breadth of view and public spirit had made him, in the dozen years of his pastorate, one of the best liked men in town. He gave Mills a cordial handshake, asked after Leila and assured Mills that he had never seen him looking better.

Lindley was a dynamic person and his presence had the effect of disturbing the tranquillity of the room. Mills wished now that he hadn't admitted the rector of St. Barnabas, with his professional good cheer and optimism. He remembered that Lindley always wanted something when he came to the office. If it proved to be help for a negro mission St. Barnabas maintained somewhere, Mills resolved to refuse to contribute. He had no intention of encouraging further the idea that he could be relied upon to support all of Lindley's absurd schemes for widening the sphere of the church. It was a vulgar idea that a sinner should prostrate himself before an imaginary God and beg for forgiveness. Where sin existed the main thing was to keep it decently out of sight. But the whole idea of sin was repellent. He caught himself up sharply. What had he to do with sin?

But outwardly Mills was serene; Lindley was at least a diversion, though Mills reflected that someone ought to warn him against his tendency to obesity. A fat man in a surplice was ridiculous, though Mills hadn't seen Lindley in vestments since the last fashionable wedding. At the reception following the wedding Mills remembered that he had been annoyed by Lindley's appetite.

Mills wondered what he had ever seen that was likable in the rector, who certainly suggested nothing of apostolic austerity. Lindley threw back his coat, disclosing a gold cross suspended from a cord that stretched across his broad chest. Mills's eyes fixed upon the emblem disapprovingly as he asked his visitor to have a cigar.

"No, thanks, Mills; I never smoke so early in the day—found it upset me. Moderation in all things is my motto. I missed you at the Clayton party the other night; a brilliant affair. Dear Leila was there, though, and Shepherd and his charming wife, to represent your family. Margaret and I left early." The clergyman chuckled and lowering his voice continued: "I've heard—I've heard *whispers* that later on the party got quite gay! I tell you, Mills, the new generation is stepping high. All the more responsibility for the forces that make for good in this world! I was saying to the bishop only the other day that the church never before faced such perplexities as now!"

"Why do you say perplexities?" asked Mills in the quiet tone and indulgent manner of an expert cross-examiner who is preparing pitfalls for a witness.

"Ah, I see you catch at the word! It's become a serious question what the church dare do! There's the danger of offending; of estranging its own membership."

"Yes, but why is it a danger?" Mills persisted.

The minister was surprised at these questions, which were wholly foreign to all his previous intercourse with Mills. His eyes opened and shut quickly. The Reverend Stuart Lindley was known as a man's man, a clergyman who viewed humanity in the light of the twentieth century and was particularly discerning as to the temptations and difficulties that beset business men. Mills must not be offended; he was the largest contributor to St. Barnabas.

"My dear Mills," he said impressively, "you know and I know that this is an age of compromise. We clergymen can't soften our warnings—the wind, you know, no longer blows on the lost sheep with the violence it once manifested, or at least the sheep no longer notice it!" A glint in Mills's eye gave him pause, but he went on hurriedly. "In certain particulars we must yield a little without appearing to yield. Do you get my point?"

"Frankly, I don't know that I do," Mills replied bluntly. "You preach that certain things are essential to the salvation of my soul. What right have you to compromise with me or anyone else? You either believe the Gospel and the creeds that are used every day in our churches or you don't. I didn't mean to start a theological discussion; I was just a little curious as to what you meant by perplexities, when the obligation is as plain as that table."

"But—you see the difficulties! We have a right to assume that God is perfectly aware of all that goes on in His world and that the changing times are only a part of His purpose."

"Well, yes," Mills assented without enthusiasm. "But I was thinking of what you and the church I was born into declare to be necessary to the Christian life. I go to church rarely, as you know, but I'm fairly familiar with the New Testament. I've got a copy with the words of Jesus printed in bold type, so you can't miss His meaning. He was pretty explicit; His meaning hits you squarely in the eye!"

"But, my dear friend, above all He preached tolerance! He knew human frailty! There's the great secret of His power."

"Oh, that's all true!" said Mills, with courteous forbearance. "You know very well that few of us—no—I'll admit that I don't live the Christian life except where it's perfectly easy and convenient. Why talk of the perplexities of the ministry when there's no excuse for any of us to mistake His meaning? You either preach Jesus or you don't! We lean heavily on His tolerance because we can excuse ourselves with that; it's only an alibi. But what of His courage? Whatever I may think of Him—divine or merely a foolish idealist—He did die for His convictions! It occurs to me sometimes that He's served nowadays by a pretty cowardly lot of followers. Oh—not you, my friend!—I don't mean anyone in particular—except myself! Probably there are other men who think much as I do, but we don't count. We pay to keep the churches going but we don't want to be bothered about our duty to God. That's a disagreeable subject!"

He ended with a smile that was intended to put Lindley at ease.

"You are absolutely right, Mills!" declared the minister magnanimously. "But as a practical man you realize that there are embarrassments in the way of doing our full duty."

"No; truly, I don't!" Mills retorted. "We either do it or we don't. But please don't think I meant to quiz you or be annoying. I wouldn't offend you for anything in the world!"

"My dear Mills!" cried the clergyman with the disdain demanded by so monstrous a suggestion.

"It never occurred to me before," Mills went on, his good humor only faintly tinged with irony, "it never struck me in just this way before, but I suppose if you were to preach to your congregation just what Jesus preached you'd empty the church."

"Well, of course—" began Lindley.

"Of course you can't do it! Jesus is the Great Example of a perfect life; but do we any of us really want to live as He lived?"

"Ah, Mills, we can only approximate perfection; that's the best we can hope for!"

"Thank you! There's some consolation in that!" Mills laughed. "But if we really took the teachings of Jesus literally we wouldn't be sitting here; we'd be out looking up people who need shelter, food, cheer. As it is I'm not bothering my head about them. I pay others to do that—Carroll hands me a list

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"Do you really think me disgraceful?" asked Leila. She seemed to Bruce like an impulsive child tonight.

of organizations he considers worthy of assistance and all I do is to sign the checks—ought to be ashamed of myself, oughtn't I?"

"Well, now, Mills," Lindley laughed pleasantly, "that's a matter I leave to your own conscience."

"But you oughtn't to! It's your duty to tell me that instead of riding up to a comfortable club today to eat luncheon with a couple of bankers I ought first to be sure that every man, woman and child in the community is clothed and fed and happy."

"What would you do if I did?" Lindley demanded.

"I'd tell you to go to the Devil!"

"There you are!" cried Lindley with a gesture of resignation. "You know your duty to your neighbor as well as I do. The affair isn't between you and me, after all, my dear friend—it's between you and God!"

"God?" Mills repeated the word soberly, his eyes turning to the window and the picture it framed, of a sky blurred by the smoke of factory chimneys. "I wonder—" he added, half to himself.

Lindley was puzzled and embarrassed, uncertain whether to try to explain himself further. His intuitions were keen and in his attempt to adjust himself to a new phase of Mills's character he groped for an explanation of the man's surprising utterances. There had been something a little wistful in Mills's use of the word *God*. Lindley was sincerely eager to help where help was needed, but as he debated whether Mills really had disclosed any need that he could satisfy, Mills ended the matter by saying a little wearily:

"What was it you wanted to see me about, Lindley?"

"It's about the Mills memorial window in St. Barnabas; the transept wall's settled lately and pulled the window out of plumb. Some of the panels are loose. The excavations for the new building across the alley caused the disturbance. Now that the building's up we'll hope the worst is over. That's one of the finest windows in the West. I had Freeman look at it and he says we'll have to get an expert out from New York to take care of it properly. The vestry's hard up as usual but I felt sure you'd want us to have the job well done—"

"Certainly, Lindley. Go ahead and send me the bill. Of course I'm glad to take care of it."

II

MILLS was again himself. The mention of the Mills memorial window had touched his pride. The window not only symbolized the miraculous powers of Jesus but quite concretely it visualized for the congregation of St. Barnabas the solid worth and continuity of the house of Mills.

He detained Lindley, gave him a chance to tell a story, made sure before he permitted him to go that the minister had not been wounded by anything he had said. He had come out pretty well in his talk with the minister; it did no harm to ruffle the complacency of a man like Lindley occasionally. But he wanted to guard against a return of the vexatious thoughts with which the day had begun.

A ride would set him up and he would find some cheerful companions to join him at the farm. Usually he planned his parties ahead but the day was too fine to let pass. He rang



The towering white pillars, Bruce thought, made a fitting frame for Millicent, emphasizing her pictorial beauty.

for Carroll, his spirits already mounting at the thought of escaping from town.

"I believe I'll run out to Deer Trail this afternoon. I'll ask some people who like to ride to join me. Will you call Mrs. Freeman, Mrs. Torrence, Leila and Miss Harden? I'll be glad to have you go if you can arrange it—I'll leave it all to you. As to men, try Doctor Armstrong, Mr. Turner, Ralph Burton—say that I'll send machines to take them out unless they prefer using their own cars. You'll look after that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see; this was the day Freeman was to meet me out there to look over the superintendent's house. I've promised Jackson to make the addition he wants this fall. Freeman's probably forgotten it—he has a genius for forgetting engagements, and I'd overlooked your memorandum till just now. Freeman hates a horse but if he goes it will only take a few minutes to show him what's wanted."

III

BRUCE was finding his association with Freeman increasingly agreeable. The architect, amusingly indifferent and careless as

to small things, was delighted to find that his new subordinate was not afraid to assume responsibility and grateful that Bruce was shielding him from the constant pecking of persons who called or telephoned about trivial matters.

"By the way, Storrs, can you run into the country this afternoon?" Freeman asked. "I promised Franklin Mills I'd meet him at his farm to look at his superintendent's house. I've put him off several times and now that Brookville man's coming in to talk house and I've got to see him. There's not much to do but get data and make my apologies to Mills. Mrs. Freeman just called up to say she's going out there to ride. Mills is having a party so he'll get through with you quickly. I don't want him to think me indifferent about his work. He's been a loyal client."

"Yes, certainly," Bruce replied, reluctant to trouble Freeman by refusing, but not relishing another meeting with Mills.

"Everybody knows where Deer Trail is—you'll have no trouble finding it. I think he said he'd be there by two-thirty. Listen carefully to what he says, and I'll take the matter up with him tomorrow. Now about the specifications for that Sterling house—"

It was thus that Bruce found himself at Deer Trail Farm on the afternoon of the day that Mills was giving his riding party.



"Leila's really growing superstitious about you," she told him. "She says you're always saving her life."

Mills, with whom punctuality was a prime virtue, came down the steps in his riding clothes and good-naturedly accepted Bruce's excuses in Freeman's behalf.

"Freeman's a busy man, of course, and a job like this is a good deal of a nuisance. You can get the idea just as well. Can you ride a horse?"

Bruce, whose eyes had noted with appreciation the horses that had been assembled in the driveway, said that he could.

"All right, then; we'll ride over. It's nearly a mile and we'll save time."

He let Bruce choose a horse for himself from a dozen or more thoroughbreds, watched him mount with critical but approving eyes, and they set off over a road that led back through the fields. Mills sat a horse well.

Finding that Bruce knew something of the American saddle stocks, he compared various breeds, calling attention to the good points of the horses they were riding.

When they reached the superintendent's house Bruce found that what was required was an extension that would provide the family with additional sleeping rooms.

He took measurements, made notes, suggested a few difficulties and in reply to Mills's questions expressed his belief that the

addition could be made without spoiling the appearance of the house.

"I suppose I really ought to tear it down and build a new house, but this hundred acres right here has been in my family a long time and the place has associations. I hate to destroy it."

"I can understand that," said Bruce, busy with his notebook.

"I think I have all the data Mr. Freeman will need, sir."

As they rode back Mills talked affably of the country; spoke of the history and traditions of the vicinity, and the sturdy character of the pioneers who had settled the region.

"I used to think sometimes of moving East—settling somewhere around New York. But I've never been able to bring myself to it. This is my own country right here. Over there—you notice that timber?—well, I'll never cut that. This whole region was forest in the early days. I've kept that strip of woodland as a reminder of the men who broke through the wilderness with nothing but their rifles and axes."

"They were a great race," Bruce remarked.

There was sentiment of a sort in Mills. As an enigma Bruce found him increasingly provocative. Mills called attention to a young orchard he had lately planted, and to his conservatories, where he amused himself, he said, trying to produce

a new rose. "Won't you stay and join in the ride?" he asked as they dismounted. "I can fit you out with breeches and puttees. I'd be delighted to have you."

"Thanks, but I must get into town," Bruce replied.

"Well, if you must! Please don't let Freeman go to sleep on this job."

Bruce, glad that his duty had been performed so easily, was starting toward his car when a familiar voice called to him from the broad pillared veranda:

"Why such a hurry? Aren't you in this party?"

He swung round to find Millicent Harden, dressed for the saddle, standing at the edge of the veranda a little apart from the animated group of Mills's other guests. As he walked toward her she came down the steps to meet him. The towering white pillars made a fitting frame for her. Here, as in the library of her own house, the ample background served to emphasize her pictorial effectiveness. Her eyes shone with happy expectancy.

"I don't care if you are here on business, you shouldn't be running away! On a day like this nobody should be in town."

"Somebody has to work in this world. How are the organ and the noble knight?"

"Both would be glad to welcome you. Leila's growing superstitious about you; she says you're always saving her life. Oh, she confessed everything about last night!—how you ministered to her and set her on her father's doorstep in fine shape. And she's going to be a good girl now. We must see that she is!"

At this moment Leila detached herself from the company on the veranda and called his attention to the fact that Mrs. Freeman was trying to bow to him. Mills, who had been discussing the fitness of one of the horses with his superintendent, announced that he was ready to start.

"I wish you were coming along," said Leila; "there's scads of horses. We'd all adore having you!"

"I'd adore coming!" Bruce answered. "But I've really got to skip."

"I'll tell dada to ask you another time. Dada isn't at all bad when you know him, is he, Millie?"

"Oh, one learns to tolerate him!" said Millicent teasingly.

"You might like driving through the farm—good road all the way from that tall elm down there," suggested Leila, "and it takes you through our woods. The color of the maples is marvelous. There's a winding stretch over yonder that's a little wild but it's interesting, and you can't get lost. It would be a shame to dash back to town without seeing something of this gorgeous day!"

"All right, thanks, I'll try it," said Bruce.

With his roadster in motion he wondered dejectedly whether there was any way of escaping Franklin Mills and his family. But the sight of Millicent had heartened him. The glowing woodlands were brighter for his words with her. He wished he might have taken her away from Mills and his party and ridden alone with her in the golden haze of the loveliest of autumn afternoons.

Suddenly when he was beyond the Deer Trail boundaries and running along slowly he came upon a car drawn up close to the stake-and-rider fence that enclosed a strip of woodland. His quiet approach over the soft road Leila had described had not been noted by the two occupants of the car, a man and a woman.

Two lovers, presumably, who had sought a lonely spot where they were unlikely to be observed, and Bruce was about to speed his car past them when the woman lifted her head with an involuntary cry of surprise that caused him, quite as involuntarily, to turn his gaze upon her. It was Constance Mills; her companion was George Whitford.

"Hello, there!" Whitford cried and Bruce stopped his car and got out. "Mrs. Mills and I are out looking at the scenery. We started for the Country Club but lost interest."

"Isn't this a heavenly day?" remarked Mrs. Mills with entire serenity. "George and I have been talking poetry—an ideal time for it!" She held up a book. "Yeats—he's so marvelous! Where on earth are you wandering to?"

"I've been to Deer Trail—a little errand with Mr. Mills for my boss."

"Oh, is Mr. Mills at the farm? What is it—a party?" she asked carelessly.

"Yes, Miss Mills, Miss Harden, Mrs. Torrence and Mrs. Freeman are there to ride—I didn't make them all out."

"It sounds quite gay," she said languidly. "I've thought a lot about our talk yesterday. You evidently delivered Leila home without trouble. It was awfully sweet of you, I'm sure. I don't believe we'll go in to the farm, George. I think a crowd of people would bore me today, and we must get back into town."

Whitford started his car, and as they moved away Constance leaned out and smiled and waved her hand. Bruce stood for a moment gazing after them, deep in thought. Constance Mills, he decided, was really a very clever woman.

IV

AFTER his visit to Deer Trail Farm Bruce found himself in a cynical humor with reference to his own life and the lives of the people with whom he had lately come in contact. He was again isolating himself, spending his evenings in his apartment, where no one was likely to trouble him. He found no consolation in the thought that so many others apparently found as little satisfaction in existence as he. Nothing was substantial or definite. He read prodigiously—poetry and philosophy, and the latest discussions of the problems of the time—caught in these an occasional gleam. It seemed centuries ago that he had walked in the Valley of the Shadow in France. The tragedy of war seemed as nothing weighed against the tragedy of his own life. Why had she told him? was a question he despairingly asked himself. His mother had had no right to go out of the world leaving him to carry the burden her confession had laid upon him. Then again, with a quickening of his old affection for her, he felt that some motive, too fine and high for his understanding, had impelled her to the revelation.

He had settled himself to read one evening when Henderson, always unexpected in his manifestations of sociability, dropped in at his apartment.

"Maybelle's at Shep Mills's rehearsing in a new dramatic club show so I romped up here hoping to catch you in. I guessed you'd be here laughing heartily all to yourself. I've cut the booze; honest I have. My bootlegger strolled in today but I kissed him good by forever. So don't offer me any licker; my noble resolution isn't so strong that I mightn't yield to a whisper from the Devil."

"You're safe! I'm a tame devil tonight. There's nothing stronger on the premises than a tooth wash warranted not to remove the enamel."

Henderson picked up the book Bruce had been reading, "A World in Need of God," and ran his eye over the chapter headings.

"The Unlit Lamp," "The Descent Perilous," "Untended Altars"—so you've got it too, have you?"

"I've got the book, if that's what you mean," Bruce replied.

"I paid two dollars for it. It's a gloomy work; no wonder the author put it out anonymously."

"It's a best seller," Henderson replied mournfully as he seated himself and drew out his pipe. "The world is nervous about itself—doesn't know whether to repent and be good or stroll right along to the fiery pit. Under my stoical exterior, Bruce, old boy, I trouble a good deal about the silly human race. That phrase, 'The Descent Perilous,' gives me a chill. If I'd edited that book I'd have made it 'The Road to Hell is Easy' and drawn a stirring picture of the universe returning to chaos to the music of jazzy bands. People seem anxious to be caught all lit up when our little planet jumps the track and runs amuck. But there really are a few imbeciles, like the chap who produced that book, who're troubled about the whole business. We all think we're playing comedy rôles but if we'd just take a good square look at ourselves in the mirror we'd see that we're made up for tragedy."

"Lordy! Hear the boy talk! If I'd known you were coming I'd have hidden the book."

"There's a joke! I've been in several prosperous homes lately where I got a glimpse of that joyous work stuck under the sofa pillows. Everybody's afraid to be caught with it—afraid it points to a state of panic in the purchaser. It's the kind of thing folks read and know it's all true and get so low in their minds they pull the old black bottle from its hiding place and seek alcoholic oblivion."

"I bought the thing as a matter of business. If all creation's going to shoot the chutes I want to be prepared. It's silly for me to get all set to build houses for people if the world's coming to an end."

"By Jove, when the crash comes I'm going to be stuck with a lot of Plantagenets!"

"But this chap thinks the world can be saved! He says in the mad rush to find some joy in life we're forgetting God. The spiritual spark growing dim—all that sort of thing."

"Um-m." Henderson took the pipe from his mouth and peered into the bowl. "He may be right, at that. I'm a sinner—chock full of sin, original and acquired. I haven't been to church since my wedding except to a (Continued on page 156)

By
STEPHEN
VINCENT
BENÉT

A
Love Story
as fresh as
a Spring
Breeze

Beaver!

Illustrations by
Harrison Fisher

"EVERY day, in every way," asserted Mrs. Conduit, looking firmly at herself in the mirror, "I am getting better and better. Every day in every way I am getting better and better. Everydayneverywaym-getnbettrbettr. Evryd—"

She stopped, abruptly. "But it doesn't! It just aches worse all the time," she confided, with a sigh. Then she brightened—she was a person of great persistence.

"If it only weren't for the headache! I could do it so nicely when there wasn't anything the matter with me," she thought resentfully. "So unobliging of it. Perhaps I'd better try the other way."

She straightened herself and began to apply the palm of her hand to her forehead with a curious circular motion as of rubbing in invisible cold cream.

"*Ça passe!*" she intoned. "*Ça passe! Ça passe, çapassssss—*"

The rubbing grew faster. So did her chant. In a moment she was humming like a gigantic, dignified top.

"*Pssssssssss—*"

The door flew open, admitting, with a bounce, William Conduit Junior; a short, pink, worried looking young man with surprised blond hair.

"Mother! What on earth are you doing? Pretending you're a bee?"



"I was just trying a little *ça passe*, Billy, for one of my headaches," murmured Mrs. Conduit mildly, "and I really think it must have worked this time—or else it was your coming in so suddenly—startled me—"

"I'm awfully sorry. How is it?"

"Quite gone, I think," said Mrs. Conduit nervously. Then a smile came. She spread her arms, with a gesture. "Quite gone!" she repeated melodiously. "Quite—qu-i-te—go-one!"

"That's fine!" commented her offspring absent-mindedly. Then his grievance returned. "See here," he began in a threatening voice, "is this straight, what Dotty's just told me, or is she

lying again? Is it straight? Have I got—have I got—” His voice wavered. “She says you told her I’ve got to go down with the big car and wait for this wet smack of an English Egyptologist—Lord Whoozis. Oh, she doesn’t know which his train is! Said he wired he was coming between five and eight.



Billy

Between five and eight. And then I’m to shepherd him all around and see he gets dressed and over to the Club and sit through the dinner and lecture and everything *myself!*” He uttered loud, rude sounds expressive of rage and dismay. “Is she right, I ask you?” he finished with a snort. “Because if she is—”

“Now, William,” began Mrs. Conduit patiently. “Now, William—if you’ll remember—at lunch—”

Her forehead contracted. She put her hand to it weakly.

“*Ça passe!*” she murmured “*Ça passe—ça passe—ça passe!*” All is Good. Good is All. Karma, Karma—oh no, that’s theosophy, isn’t it? *Ça passe*, I mean, *ça*—”

“Now, William!” said her infuriated child. “Now, William, indeed!” Then he changed to a pleading whine. “Honestly, mother—I can’t. I just can’t and that’s all there is to it. I’ve got a date. I’ve got a tea date—a dinner date—and I’m going to the Marstons’ dance—it’s the year’s best party—and—”

“William!” breathed Mrs. Conduit. She reclined her brow upon her hand. No man with a spark of chivalry could have failed her.

“Oh, all right, then—all right! I’m the goat, I suppose. As usual. Only—”

Mrs. Conduit’s glance drifted towards a clock.

“I don’t want to hurry you, William dear. But as long as he said that he might come at five—”

“Oh Lord! Why can’t Dotty go?”

“She couldn’t, dear. He would think it much too American.”

“Well, isn’t there anybody else?”

“No, dear!” said Mrs. Conduit decisively. “I would but—there’s a meeting of the Friends of the Wayward Girl. At half-past five.”

“Well, how long is he going to stay?”

“A week, I think. He has another lecture Wednesday.”

William groaned aloud.

“A week. And it’s only another week till I have to go back to college! I suppose I’ll have to play nurse to ‘Is ‘Ighness the whole blame week. Not that I count,” he inserted bitterly. “I don’t matter—oh, no—I—” His feelings choked him.

“I thought you might take him out for some golf on Monday,” said his mother placidly. “I understood from Mrs. Remsen that Lord Dolicho plays.”

“Golf? An Egyptologist? I bet he thinks you play it with cues.”

“Lord Dolicho is a very agreeable and well informed young man. You will have a great opportunity before you in meeting him, William,” said Mrs. Conduit. “International friendships—so delightful!” she continued vaguely. “The bonds of a common heritage.”

“Opportunity—huh! I bet he’s agreeable—one of those nice, chatty Englishmen. Really? Aw-fly! So good of you. Don’t y’know! Oh, I bet he’s a prize wet towel!” he concluded with extraordinary vehemence. Then a horrible thought occurred to him. “I don’t have to take him along to the dance, do I?” he said in breaking tones.

Mrs. Conduit relented.

“I don’t know if his lordship dances. From what I gather, he seems to be a rather serious young man.” She smiled. “But of course if he *should* dance—”

“Oh, holy Henry Ford! He probably polkas. Well—it’s lucky I’m going East again—that’s all I’ll say. I wouldn’t be able to speak to a girl if I stayed—after wishing a dumb bunny like that on a real six cylinder party.”

“It’s getting later, William,” said Mrs. Conduit.

“I suppose so. Don’t worry—I’ll be there—between five and eight. I’m going.” He turned toward the door. “Say, how am I going to recognize this baby? Will he wear a red carnation in his buttonhole or what?”

“He will have a great many bags.” Mrs. Conduit was amused. “And an English accent. He is tall and, as I remember, wears gold spectacles. A charming young man.”

“Nice specifications!” grunted her son. “And I suppose he’ll wear one of those Airedale suits without any crease in the trousers. Oh really—

aw'fly—so glad to meet ya—darn!" He departed, slamming the door.

Mrs. Conduit waited a second. Then, "William!" she called.

"Yeah. What?"

"Oh, nothing. Marcia Mather will be at the dinner tonight."

She heard no intelligible reply—only something between a snort and a grunt. She turned back toward her mirror, smiling. Dear Billy—he was a little hard to manage sometimes, now that he was so sure of being quite grown up. But the Woman's Club she ruled with an iron hand had not nicknamed her the Holy Steam Roller for nothing.

II

"NUMBER SEVUN-TEEN," bawled the man with the megaphone. "Now re-reported forty-five minutes la-a-te!"

William Conduit Junior threw his cigarette on the floor of the station smoking room and stamped on it. It was nearly six-thirty and he had already met three trains without result.

"Oh mother—mother!" he moaned.

Her family was proud of Mrs. Conduit but it sometimes found her varied activities hard on them. The last census showed a dozen or so young, active, prosperous cities the size of Mastodon—first in the manufacture of adhesives and third in bathroom fixtures, waste baskets and dental supplies, as the Rotary Club would tell you—and most of them had from two to a dozen Mrs. Conduits to leaven their material side. But Mrs. Conduit was the whole thing in Mastodon. It was she who organized charity drives and tag days, who entertained all visiting celebrities, who presided over the Little Theater Guild and the Fund for Hopeless Armenians, who had introduced Fletcherism, free verse, Eugene O'Neill, hand painted bedroom furniture and "The March of the Wooden Soldiers" to the startled City of Mastodon.

His mother was superb, thought William. No doubt of it. But— He smiled in spite of himself, recognizing her gift for anticipating fashions. Last year everything had been Russian—and Mrs. Conduit's Russian ball was embalmed in the files of the Mastodon Sun-Journal as "the choicest entertainment of Mastodon's gayest season." This year Egypt was just beginning to come to the fore and Mrs. Conduit, with Napoleonic intuition, had seized upon the only distinguished foreign Egyptologist west of Pittsburgh—and had bagged an English lord as well. It was magnificent—very—but William sighed and yearned for a quiet life.

Still, mother was square. She had managed to let Marcia Mather in for this terrible affair. William had suffered all summer from excessive competition—for Marcia was inordinately popular. There would certainly be little competition tonight—everyone else would be at parties preliminary to the Marston dance. William smiled. It really mightn't be so bad, after all.

He paraded up and down the length of the waiting room for the sixteenth time, feeling horribly conscious that the local agent of the Society for Guarding Otherwise Unprotected Girls was keeping an eye on him. Then he lighted a new cigarette and settled himself to read and think about Marcia.

When Number Seventeen at last disgorged its passengers, William recognized Lord Dolicho at once. He smiled, thinking

of his mother's description. Lord Dolicho was just like that. He was tall, gold-spectacled and dressed in a fuzzy tweed. His collar was a size too large for him and his face had the brickly tint and extraordinary absence of all human curiosity which one associates with the leading juvenile in a British comedy



Lord Dolicho—"Fluffles"

of manners. Two porters carried his multitudinous bags. William went up to him.

"Lord Dolicho?"

"Yes."

"I'm Mr. Conduit—here to meet you. The car's outside. If you'll just—"

"Oh yes, rather! How do you do, Mr. Conduit. Jolly of you, this. Stranger in a strange land and all that sort of thing. Hope I haven't kept you waiting—the train was beastly late."

"Oh no—not at all!" said William politely. He was somewhat oppressed by wonder as to whether he should add "Your Lordship" or not.

Lord Dolicho relapsed into silence during the drive home, arousing only once when they swung down by the river.

"What—a river?" he said with apparent excitement. "Didn't know you had a river. Stupid of me."

"Oh yes, it's quite a big river!" said William, feeling like a fool. He guided his guest to his room and then walked about nervously while Lord Dolicho began to fiddle with his numerous bags.

"I'm afraid you'll have to dress in rather a hurry," William said. "You see, it's after seven and I think you're having dinner at the Club at eight—"

"Right!" said Lord Dolicho at once and began to paw feverishly in the largest bag. "Notes for my lecture," he explained. "Can't think what I could have done with them—ah!" and he extracted about three pounds of typewritten matter and a huge collection of photographs. "I say, how long have I got? Mustn't drag it out too long, eh? Bore them."

"Oh, they're all very anxious to hear you!" said William insincerely. He gave Lord Dolicho up. He had visions of that suave and bricky gentleman dilating for hours upon the Egyptian vegetation myths while Marcia escaped to the Marston dance and he, William, sat in the front row with the smile of a dying gladiator frozen upon his lips. He would not be able to escape. He knew his mother.

He returned about twenty minutes later to find Lord Dolicho struggling with his tie. An inspiration had occurred to him in the interim. He carried it in on a tray.

"How about a cocktail?" he proffered hospitably. "I'm afraid the dinner'll be dry."

"Oh, very pleasant!" said Lord Dolicho. His face seemed to flicker with something approaching interest. "Jolly good of you."

William felt cheered.

"Well, here's to crime."

"Cheerio."

The process was repeated.

"Hot dog!" said William appreciatively.

"Excellent, what?"

"And now how about a little dividend?" said William persuasively.

"Ah well." Lord Dolicho seemed pensive. He abolished his quota with neatness and dispatch. William's heart began to warm to the man.

"A touch of Scotch?" asked Lord Dolicho diffidently. And in the instant he had conjured a gigantic flask from his bag.

"Real thing," he proffered. "Five star. Brought it over myself."

There was a knock at the door.

"Mrs. Conduit's compliments and the car is waiting."

"Just a nip?" said Lord Dolicho. "No time? Too bad."

"Take it along," said William firmly. The three cocktails had hit him all at once and he felt to Lord Dolicho as to a long lost brother.

"Really? But I say, would that be all right? Breaking laws and things?"

"Take it along!" said William decisively, his eyes beginning to bulge. "Like dancing?"

"Eh?"

"Like to dance? Oh, you know—tango—toddle—the lancers—"

"Oh, rather!" exclaimed Lord Dolicho, suddenly performing a perfect pirouette.

"All right. Big dance on tonight. We'll sneak away and crash in on it. Take that along—I'm going heeled myself."

"Sport. O nuts in May!" asserted that serious young Egyptologist, Lord Dolicho, and wedged the flask into his pocket where it seemed to sink without a trace.

III

LORD DOLICHO'S lecture was nearing its peroration, and William, in the front row, felt a trifle dazed. The dinner had not been a

dry one—but that was not the reason, for he had been careful. What dazed him was the behavior of his friend, Lord Dolicho.

The dinner had begun like most good American dinners by the ushering of the guests into a side room for cocktails. Of these Lord Dolicho had partaken freely—William had counted three at least—and during dinner there had been champagne, which Lord Dolicho had by no means refused. After dinner, and just before his speech, he had also absorbed some quantity of Mr. Willoughby's hospitably proffered Scotch. With no apparent result except a slight additional brickiness of countenance and an occasional furtive smile.

"He must be lined with porcelain," thought William enviously. "Except where he's full of phonograph records on Egypt." He gritted his teeth. He was not having a very good time.

At dinner he had been seated between Marcia and Professor Grosbeak's wife, with Lord Dolicho on Marcia's other side. And from the fish course on he had seen nothing of Marcia except the back of her neck. It had been the work of a second—only a second—when he had had to turn and answer one of Mrs. Grosbeak's questions. But when he turned back to Marcia she was talking to Lord Dolicho and he had never been able to get her attention again. All he got was irritating scraps of what appeared to be Lord Dolicho's autobiography.

"But was it really a lion?" from Marcia, in her most innocent voice.

"Rather. A big fellow. But then, you see, my bearer . . . You American girls are jolly sporting, Miss Mather. It reminds me of one time when we were digging near Luxor and a sand storm . . ."

Things like that.

And now the dumbbell had been talking for at least two hours, William considered savagely, and everybody was simply pop-eyed about him. He craned his neck to look at Marcia. She was leaning forward, lips parted, fairly drinking in Lord Dolicho's description of the nuptial customs of the Shepherd Kings, that look on her face that is hardest of all for a suitor to bear when it is not directed at him—a Desdemona-like frankness of admiration for the hardy exploits of a big, brave, modest man.

Lord Dolicho sat down amid a storm of applause. He had to bow repeatedly, and even William admitted that he did it well. Women were pressing forward to shake his hand. William struggled against the current, looking frantically for Marcia.

"Hey, Marsh! Let's wander over to the Marstons—I've got the car."

"You're an angel, Pilly—I'll be with you in half a sec—I've just got to ask Lord Dolicho one question first. He certainly is the alligator's adenoids, isn't he?"

William swore.

Nor was he any more pleased when, after most of the audience had ebbed away, Marcia appeared, dragging Lord Dolicho after her by the hand.

"He's crossed his heart he's coming with us, haven't you, Lord Dolicho? He says he's just dying to go to a real American party. And he dances like Valentino—we've just been practicing."

"Indeed?" said William Conduit Junior in an unnatural voice.

The dance, though eventful, was not as William had pictured it. Lord Dolicho swept all before him—rather, I am afraid, in spite of William than because of him. William managed to stick him once with bulbous Minnie Colgate, but that was all. And then, mused William bitterly, Jim Colgate had to cut right in, of course. Once rescued, Lord Dolicho eluded all similar traps with a practiced airiness, devoting himself with unerring good judgment to a half-dozen of the most attractive—and first and foremost to Marcia. William, drooping like a limp lily on the edge of the stag line, regarded the gay scene before him with melancholy eyes. It was one o'clock and the party had just attained the condition known as "right"—and he hadn't seen either Marcia or Lord Dolicho for a long, long time.

He was joined by Obie Clark—an ex-rival rendered ally by the pressure of a common distrust.

"Say, who is this English sheik you and Marcia wished on the party, anyway?" Obie growled. "He's just about ruined my evening. The girls won't talk about anything else, and as for Marcia—"

"He's an Egyptologist," said William. "An Egyptologist. And I used to think that meant an old blind man with woolly whiskers! Have you seen his flask? It's a pocket aquarium."

"Have I seen it? Have you heard his line? Hot baby! It must be wild! He and Marcia have been parked in your car for the last half-hour."

"In my car?" said William incredulously. "In our car?"

"Oh rather!" mocked Obie viciously. "Rather—what? I

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Mather.
"Well,
call me
With
He found
a bottle
being for
"Find



Eloise

suppose because it's the most comfortable looking boat around. If there were any better looking ones he'd be there."

"I'm going to bust it up," said William, pallid but determined. "No Prince of Wales is going to get away with *that* while I'm conscious. In our car!"

"Now, Bill," the malevolent Obie reminded him, "now William—don't get fractious! Remember he's your little guest!" "Guest!" said William intensely, and made for the porch.

The cool air sobered him slightly, and besides he forgot, at the moment, just where he had parked the car.

He was about to go around toward the back of the Club when low voices came to him from a dark corner of the porch. He stopped, transfixed. It was Marcia and Dolicho, and their tone informed him plainly that they were completely unaware of his presence.

"It's so different—to meet a man who's really done things, Lord Dolicho. That is, I mean a real man who's done real things. Not just a boy. Honestly, Lord Dolicho——"

"Call me Fluffles!"

"What?"

"Title. Hate the beastly thing. Call me Fluffles, Miss Mather. All my pals call me Fluffles."

"Well, Fluffles"—her voice was exquisitely silvery—"if you'll call me Marcia——"

With a low cry William turned and fled to the coat room. He found Obie Clark there, engaged in extracting the cork from a bottle whose label said something stern about the contents being for medicinal purposes only.

"Find 'em?"

William nodded. "Gimme a drink. Gimme ten drinks. No—wait a minute! I got some gin. We'll mix 'em."

"Shades of a happier time!" said Obie, impressed. "What are you after, big boy?"

"Paralysis," said William, and reached for the bottle.

IV

LORD DOLICHO's eleven foot putt just wobbled into the cup.

"That breaks it," said William resignedly. "Three and two. Sorry, Eloise."

"Oh, hot stuff, Fluffles!" cried Marcia enthusiastically. Lord Dolicho gazed at her fondly as they clasped hands.

"You were ripping!" he murmured. "Ripping!"

They stood that way for a most unnecessary length of time. William thumped the sand-box violently with his pet putter.

"Want to play it out?" he queried. "Only two more."

"Oh no!" said Marcia with a pretty yawn. "It's hot. Besides, we've demonstrated our superiority, haven't we, Fluffles?"

The foursome started toward the clubhouse. William devoted himself exaggeratedly to Eloise. (Continued on page 124)



It ALL

A Versatile Drama in Two
[Including

By BERTON

Illustrations by

Priscilla: "I'll say so! Gosh, nobody knows
How hard I've been working to make you propose!"
(Concluding this scene is a regular cinch,
We merely remark that it ends in a clinch.)

And now we view
Scene Two

Priscilla's friends (or quite a bunch
Of her companions) meet at lunch
Or tea, perhaps, it doesn't matter;
And mid their energetic chatter

THE CHARACTERS: *Priscilla Dunn*,
Blonde, beautiful—and twenty-one;
William, or rather "*Billy*" *Moore*,
Handsome, gray-haired and forty-four:
Friends, kin, sophisticated mockers,
Crape-hangers, loyal boosters, knockers.

Place—anywhere; the *Time*, today
Or thereabouts. That sets the play,
Come on folks, let's be on our way.

Act One, Scene One
The play's begun

Discovered—*Bill*, also *Priscilla*;
Bill speaks, as they rest from a dance:
"That music would certainly thrill a
Dominican monk with romance!
And I'm not an anchorite—no, not at all.
For music like that casts a magical thrall
About all my being, and so—well, you see——"

Priscilla: "The music is nice as can be,
But weren't you thrilled—just a little—by Me?"

Bill: "Wasn't I? Darling and dearest of girls,
You thrill me till all of the blood in me swirls.
My heart fairly thunders and—whoa, Billy, whoa!
An old bird like you are can't play Romeo!"

Priscilla: "Old! Billy, why what do you mean?
You're just the right age, you are quite young enough,
Beside you the college boys seem sort of green,
I won't hear you spill such ridiculous stuff;
Now, what were you saying—or going to say?"

Bill: "I am December, and you—you are May.
At least that's what sensible people would say."

Priscilla: "December! September, my dear,
The loveliest, splendoriest time of the year!
Go on—please go on; I am listening, Bill."

Bill: "No, no! I mustn't—I shouldn't! But still,
I love you, *Priscilla*, more dearly than life,
Oh, darn all my doubting! Will you be my wife?"



This is the sort of thing we hear:
"A terrible mistake, my dear.
He must be more than twice her age.
I don't see how she could engage
Herself to such a patriarch."
"Well, as for me, I must remark,
I think, it's Money."
"Nonsense, she has,
As much, or even more, than he has."

"Of course he's clever and all that,
And dances well—and isn't fat;
But just the same he's past his prime."

"He'll think she ought to spend her time
Darning his socks."

"And when she goes
To dances, parties, teas and shows,
She'll find he can't keep up the pace;
And he'll insist that woman's place
Is home sweet home."

Depends

*Acts and Lots of Scenes
an Epilogue]*

B R A L E Y

A. H. Henkel

"To me it's clear
The marriage will not last a year."

Scene Three

Bill's friends:
A smoky cloud
Wavers and blends
About the crowd
Which holds some bachelors like Bill,
Some younger, and some older still;
Some married men, and two or three
Who "are not now, but used to be."

The talk runs thus:

"Bill's done for."

"Say

I wonder how they get that way,
These cradle robbers!"

"He'll regret it,

The poor old wreck!"

"Wreck? Say, forget it,

There's not a young man in this bunch
With half Bill's muscle, pep and punch!"

"But she's a flapper, just a kid."

"He's much too old. I never did
Believe in such a match."

"A wife

Will lead that bird an awful life."



"She's twenty-one, he's forty-four.
I give 'em, well, a year—no more."
"What could that girl be thinking of?"
"Well," Bill's best friend observes, "perhaps
You wise old guys and bright young chaps
Have heard of something known as—Love."

Act Two, Scene One

They are married, Priscilla and Bill.
The honeymoon's over, the first gorgeous thrill
Of marriage is passing. The conjugal pair
Are slowly but surely becoming aware
That there are a number of people about
Besides just the two of them. There's not a doubt
They're showing at last a decided proclivity
To welcome some measure of social activity.

Though home's where the heart is
They're going to parties
And Bill and his wife are the life of the crowd;
Priscilla is blooming, and Billy is proud
To take her about and exhibit his prize.
A wife who is easy on everyone's eyes.

They golf and they bridge and they tennis and dance,
And Bill is as gay as a youth of romance.

But—hark to the gossips, both female and male:
"They're certainly hitting the primrosy trail,
Bill can't keep it up!"

"She's a regular gadabout;
Oh, somehow there's something that's awfully
sad about

A man at the middle-aged season of life
Who tries to keep pace with a very young wife!"

"I'll bet he is tiring
Of constantly squiring

Priscilla around to these various places.

"His face shows some most unmistakable traces
Of having enough
Of frivol and fluff."

"Poor Bill."

"Well, his future is certainly tough,
He loves her, no doubt,
But she'll wear him out

With all of this dancing and running about!"

"December and May—
Bill's getting more gray!"

"I wager he's begging Priscilla to stay





More often at home for an evening of quiet
In place of society's turmoil and riot."

"It all shows the cold inescapable truth
That age can't keep up with the vigor of youth."

Act Two, Scene Two

Priscilla; Bill.

Priscilla: "Dear, it's time to go."

Bill: "Aw, let's stick around until
The party's over. If we blow
We'll miss a lot of gorgeous fun.
Seems like the evening's just begun.

Come on, kid, where's your well known pep.
Let's do that latest fox-trot step;
We'll show this bunch a married pair
That, as a dancing team, are *there*."

Priscilla: "Billy, please let's stop!
I am so weary I could drop.
We've been out every night this week
Till two o'clock or three or four.
I'm so fatigued I want to shriek,
I simply can't dance any more.
Please take me home and let me sleep,
I can't sustain the pace you keep."

Act Two, Scene Three

Priscilla lies
Abed, with heavy-lidded eyes.

Bill tiptoes in all shaved and dressed
And radiating vim and zest,
Smiles as he sees her sleeping there,
Kisses her lightly on her hair
And tiptoes out to work. And when
He calls his house at half-past ten
Priscilla answers: "Morning, Bill,
I just woke up. I'm sleepy still;
But if you'd like to have me to,
I'll lunch at one o'clock with you."

Epilogue

The method dramatic we'll herewith abandon,
It isn't as easy a job as we planned on.

In simple narration
The Moores' situation
Has come down to this—that Priscilla stays home
While Bill is the butterfly, eager to roam
With other gay spirits. He urges his wife
To join him in "getting some fun out of life,"
And sometimes she goes
To dances and shows,
Or plays in society's mad hurly-burly,
Providing that Bill
Makes promise he will
Be certain to bring her home "decently early."
And now all the knockers
And gossips and mockers
Are busy constructing a peppy scenario
With Bill as the wicked and cruel Lothario
Neglecting his spouse
That he may carouse,
And setting a pace which "no weak little woman
Can possibly travel."

"It's simply inhuman
The way that he treats her," the gossipers say.
"I wonder she stands it for even a day!"

The Moores, as a matter of fact, are quite happy.
Bill's busy and daily more peppy and snappy;
He outplays the young 'uns at golf; and at tennis
He's known and respected as always a menace.
The flappers enthuse over Bill and his dancing,
Which seems to grow better as years are advancing.

Priscilla's contented, and proud of him, too.
And as for herself—she has plenty to do.
With three husky young ones to nurture and train,
She's busy for most of her time, it is plain.

The moral is simply: *You Never Can Tell*.
There isn't a rule which works equally well
For different cases. December and May
Have often been wed in the happiest way.
December is, frequently, you may recall,
A brisk, snappy, vigorous month, after all.





MARION DAVIES has a most congenial rôle in the Cosmopolitan picture, "Little Old New York," as the plucky Patricia O'Day who left her native Ireland and came to New York disguised as a boy.



***JULIA ARTHUR** has closed her very successful engagement in a tabloid version of "Hamlet" in order to play the part of Queen Elizabeth in a new Cosmopolitan picture with Marion Davies and an all star cast.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE STUDIO



ALLYN KING, who violates the tradition that blondes are passive and calm as she breezily sings and dances her way through Lew Canter's musical comedy, "Sun Showers," wherein she is prima donna.

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED BRON.



DOLLY WEGMAN, who has that rare combination, blue eyes and brown hair, and who came here from Petrograd and achieved immediate success, her latest engagement being in "The Dancing Girl."

PHOTOGRAPH BY AYDA

By ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE



His Past

Illustrations by Grant T. Reynard

*A Story
of the
Inside of a
Man's
Heart*

THE clerk who ushered the woman into the private office grinned furtively at the big man who sat behind the big desk. He had been his employer's lackey for years enough to know how Henry Staggard, of Staggard, Inc., would treat such a timorous visitor as this. The boss certainly was a wonder at getting rid of women.

Staggard did not invite the woman to sit down. He busied himself for fully five minutes with important looking documents, while the perspiration grew thicker upon the forehead of the visitor. Standing there, fidgeting, picking at her shabby coat with stubby nervous fingers, pushing back from her wet temples sparse strands of gray hair, she was an object to inspire chivalrous pity in the heart of a decent man. Life had been so harsh to her; one knew that the callouses on her hands had not been put there by golf clubs or tennis rackets, but by the laborious wielding of a mop upon an office floor. The sun gleaming upon the sands of a beach had not weakened her eyes; painstaking work of nights with a needle had dimmed them.

Suddenly Staggard looked up. "You're Mary Fenwick, aren't you?"

She bobbed her head. "Yes, sir, Mr. Staggard, sir."

He frowned heavily. "Don't you know that I'm a busy man? I've written you letters explaining that I can't do anything for you, and yet you force your way into my office."

She was white; the crimson of embarrassment had given way to the pallor of fear.

"Your advertisement said that Tri-State Oil would be worth twice what it cost," she said.

"It will be," declared Staggard.

"But the doctor says I've got to quit work, and I tried to sell my stock, and nobody'd buy it. I need the money, and that's why I wrote to you."

"And I replied that you must be patient," said Staggard.

"But I must have my money," cried the woman.

"Is that so?" asked Staggard. "Are you threatening me? If you are I'll send for a policeman."

She burst into frightened tears. "I don't know what I'll do," she moaned.

Staggard rang a bell; the clerk entered, wiping a grin from his mouth with the back of his hand. Staggard pointed at the woman.

"Show her out," he ordered.

Unresistingly the woman followed the clerk. There was something brutal about the bigness of Staggard that made her forget all that she had planned to say. She knew how useless words would be. Staggard smiled as the door closed behind her. He had kept well within the law when he sold the stock.

Five minutes later the clerk announced that a man was calling, and that he was a tough customer.

"He's liable to kick up a fuss, and I thought maybe you'd better see him yourself," explained the clerk.

"All right," said Staggard. His manner was entirely different as he noted the bulk of this visitor. He was fully as big a man

as Staggard, and had a bronzed color that spoke of outdoor work.

"Are you Staggard?" he demanded.

Staggard beamed expansively. "I certainly am," he replied breezily. "What can I do for you, partner?"

The visitor's ire lessened perceptibly. "You can give me back the money I paid for a hundred shares of Tri-State," he stated.

"That so?" Staggard was interested. "What's the matter?"

"Plenty! I got talking with some friends of mine and they said your stock was a fake."

Staggard whipped a fountain pen from his waistcoat pocket and drew a pad of paper toward him. "Names! Addresses!" he cried.

"What for?" asked the other.

"Sue them," exclaimed Staggard. "Sue them for criminal libel; put them in jail where they belong."

The bronzed man whistled. "Oh, you needn't get het up!" he said. "They're just friends of mine who are kinda interested in me. You see, there's no market for Tri-State—"

Staggard uttered a grunt of impatience. "Of course not! Not now. But in three months— Give me the names of those people."

"Then the stock is good?" asked the man uncertainly.

Staggard eyed him pityingly. "Do I look like a man who'd sell worthless stock? I tell you, partner, that the way to get ahead in this world is not to listen to a lot of simple minded friends, but to listen to a shrewd business man. Have your friends made a million dollars? I guess not. But I have! And I have hundreds of thousands invested in Tri-State."

Simple, as nearly all men who live by their hands are, the man was impressed by Staggard's blunt speech. "I guess I'll wait awhile," he declared.

Staggard smiled almost affectionately. "That's good sound sense," he said. He rose, gripped the man's hand fervently, and ushered him from his office. He returned, grinning, to his desk. There was always a way. If threat were inadvisable, blunt camaraderie would serve . . .

He leaned back comfortably in his chair. His thoughts ceased to dwell upon business; they traveled toward Rose Bellamy. On the way they rested upon Frank Allen, just long enough for him to sneer. For he was quite sure that Rose Bellamy was not going to marry young Allen. He had his ways of finding out things; he could draw conclusions from scattered facts. And if she had decided not to marry Allen, it could be only because she had decided to marry Staggard. His smile of self-content was expansive. Today he would arrive at the summit toward which he had been traveling so long.

And how easy the road had been! He had begun with nothing save a certain gift for chicanery. He could tell part of the truth with an engaging frankness that made his auditor feel ashamed of himself for wishing to ask searching questions. And he could lie in a downright fashion that compelled belief. But he was a bit afraid of the complete falsehood. It was, he learned, so much easier to say something that was based upon a flimsy foundation of truth, and later to maintain that he had been misunderstood or duped himself, as the case might be.

Most of the time he got away with it. But there had been two times when he hadn't, and a third when he had felt the manacles reaching out for his wrists.

On the first two occasions clever lawyers had aided him; once he had escaped with a suspended sentence and the other time with a fine. After that he had been careful—save once. And then he had signed a confession, paid back several thousand dollars and considered himself lucky to have been permitted to live.

Not that he condemned himself from a moral standpoint. Most certainly not. Fools were his meat, and he was a long-fanged wolf. But he had been too confident of himself, too sure of the asininity of the victim . . . He shuddered now when he thought about it.

And today he was thinking about it. It had always been a cloud upon the serenity of his outlook. He was a practical man; he knew that the confession, signed though it was, could be discounted. In these days of prosperity he could begot the matter, claim that he signed to protect a third person . . . Only, along with the confession had been certain other papers that would eternally disprove any attempt on his part to prove himself a victim of circumstance . . .

But now, this minute, he beamed. This morning would settle it all. Not merely the confession, but the evidence that would prove the confession not to have been extorted unfairly: all were to be returned to him.

It was about six months ago that the idea had come to him. That was when a group of citizens had expressed to him their desire that he should run independently, on a platform of reform, for the Congressional seat from the district. He had accepted, and the next morning he had withdrawn.

He was rich, he was successful. But he was by no means famous. The press, the general public—he was not even a name to them. But let him accept a reform nomination and his name and picture would be spread broadcast by the newspapers. And out in a certain Western town a lawyer would read about him, would say to himself, "Henry Staggard, eh? Ah-ha! Henry Staggard."

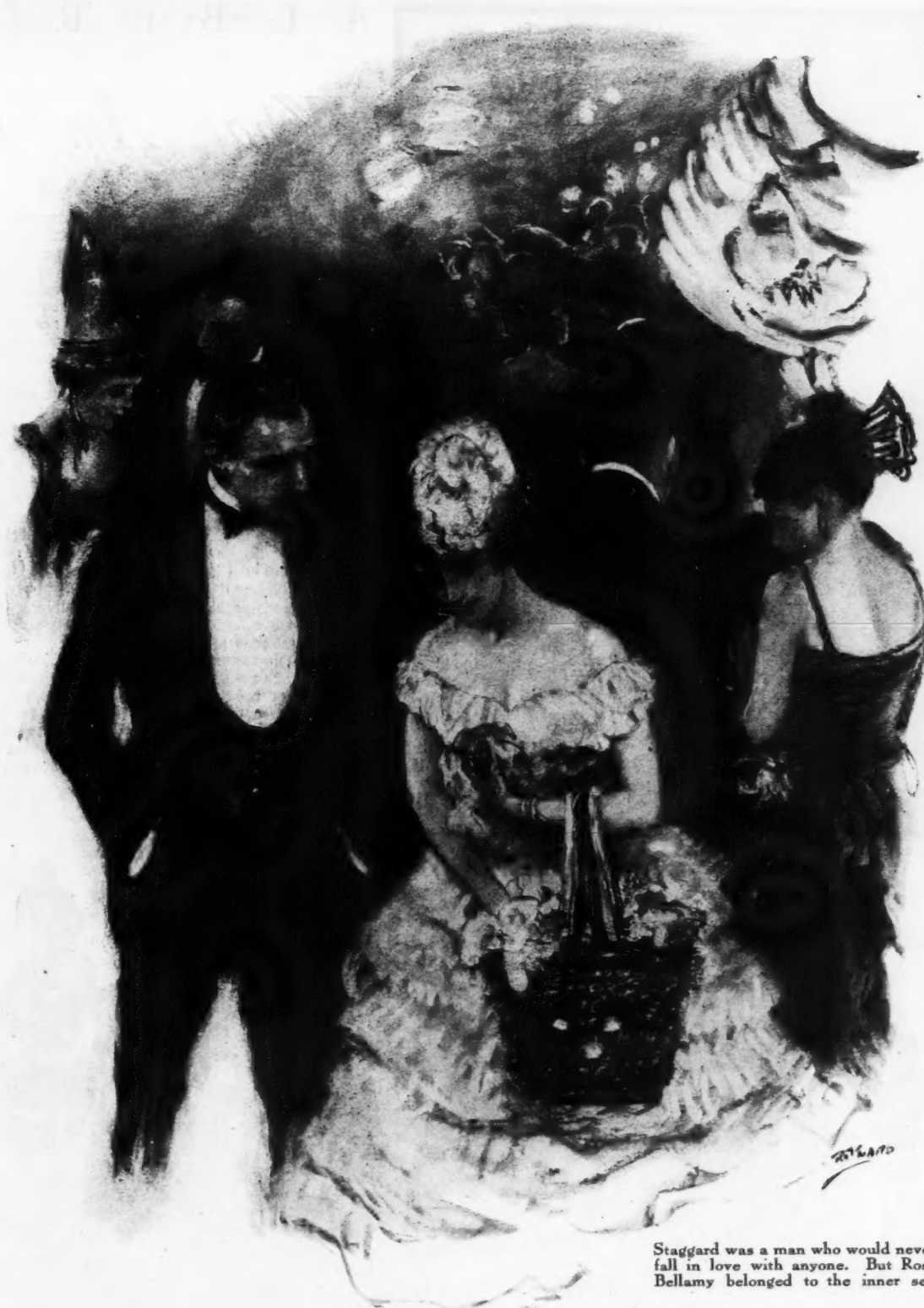
One thing or the other would then happen—blackmail or exposure of that third occasion in Staggard's life when no lawyer could have saved him. Either would be most unpleasant.

But he couldn't forever refrain from that gratification of ambition that public laudation meant. It was not sufficient to be rich, to be successful in business. He wanted to let the world know about it. There were other things, too. For instance, certain conservative bankers, merchants, financiers, looked upon him with disdainful eyes. His methods were not theirs. Of course, he kept within the confines of legality, but—they didn't care for him. When the inner circles met at dignified clubs Henry Staggard was not present. Oh, they did business with him, but only because it was necessary!

And he wanted them to do business with him because they wanted to, because they liked him.



From his pocket Blaney took—Staggard's past.



Staggard was a man who would never fall in love with anyone. But Rose Bellamy belonged to the inner set.

But he had not been asked to join the right sort of club; he had never dined in the houses on Park or Fifth Avenue, or one of the proper side streets that cross these. Not even a nomination to Congress, he had decided, would bring him the coveted invitation.

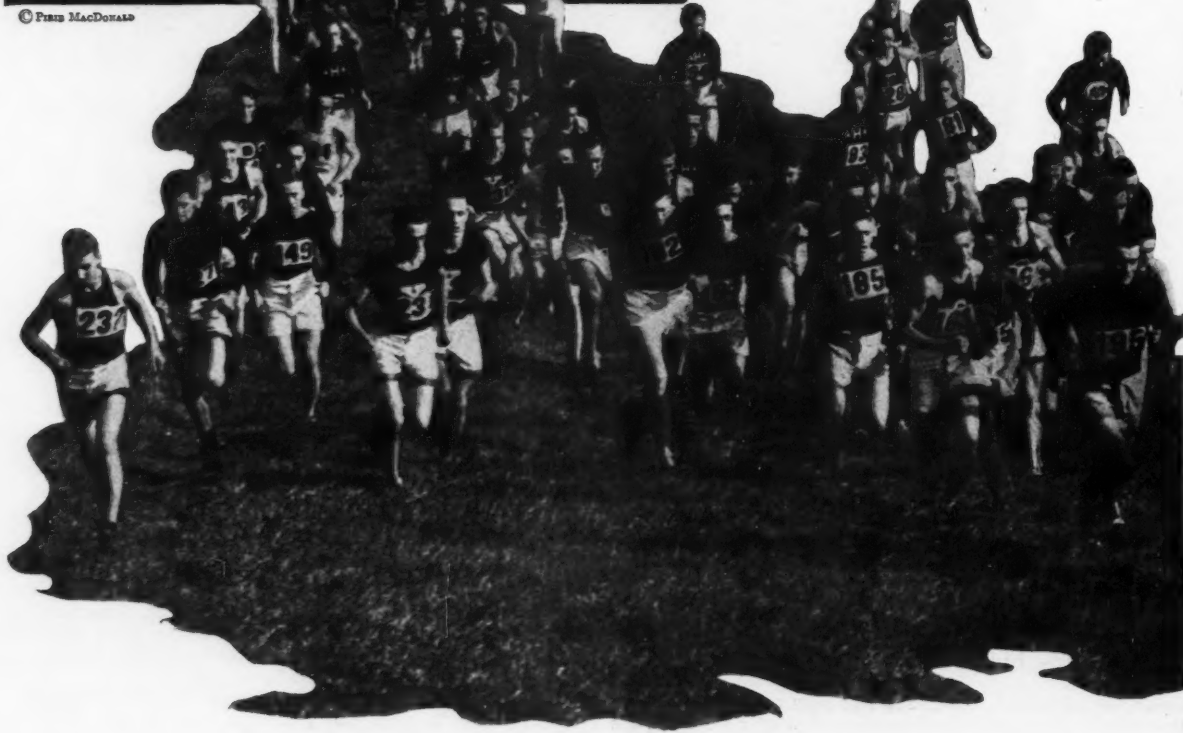
And so, the money ambition having been gratified, he turned to methods whereby he should achieve this later ambition, the outgrowth of financial success, without which money meant little—he wanted to *belong*.

He knew how—instantly. If he could marry the right woman . . . To meet her was not too difficult. One who has money may not necessarily be welcomed in the home, but may be greeted with open arms at the charity bazaar. It was at one of these that he met Rose Bellamy.

He didn't fall in love with her. He would never fall in love with anyone. But she was well born, belonged to the inner set, was beautiful, gracious . . . That an English duke had recently joined a group that had formed (Continued on page 108)



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A L B E R T

What Am I

I THINK that Fifty ought to correspond to the stock-taking season in business. It is an ideal time to find what one has lost and what one has gained and what is left in stock and how the assets line up against the liabilities.

Let's tackle the liabilities first. There are more of them; though that doesn't mean necessarily that they outweigh the assets. A dozen lumps of dirt don't outweigh a single pound of gold; even though they outnumber it, twelve to one.

Into the liabilities side of the scales we may as well dump the body. The body, from the ears down. Dump all of it at once, to save argument. Apart from its brain there isn't one fraction of an inch of it that is anywhere near as good as it was twenty-five or fifteen or even ten years ago.

At this point I can visualize some brawny fifty year old with wide shoulders and deep chest and ruddy skin and clear eye. He rises to declare: "I'm every bit as good as I was at twenty-five. I live clean and I keep out of doors and I exercise steadily. Where d'you get that stuff about my not being as good physically as I was at thirty? I feel as husky as ever I felt. I played thirty-six holes of golf yesterday and I—"

Then I interrupt: "Oh, sit down! You're the very man I've been wanting to answer. You need it. As good today as you were at twenty-five, are you? I seem to remember your boxing ten fast rounds with me when we were in the late twenties; and finishing as fresh as you began. Put on the gloves. No, not with me. I'm too old for that

Good For—Now That I'm Fifty

sort of fun, and I realize it. Put them on with that twenty-eight year old middleweight. He is lighter and shorter than you; and he isn't much of a boxer. But he's in the twenties. . . . Time!

"My friend, you've boxed only three moderately lively rounds; and I can hear you puff clear across the room. Your poor face is purple, and your knees are wobbly.

"Besides, tomorrow those light swats he's handed you are going to swell and turn yellow-green; and you're going to be as sore all over as a smashed thumb. And you were as slow after the first round as a hippopotamus. So far as boxing is concerned you've proved my point. Yet not one man in ten, at your age, is as strong and as fit as you are.

"The test wasn't fair, eh? Very good. Remember the day you and I ran all the way from Paterson to Pompton, uphill and down, just for the fun of it? Pretty fair clip we hit, too; and we finished the eight miles strong, and hardly out of breath. Well, then, just run a single mile now on level ground, and sprint at the finish. No, I won't be your pacemaker. I'm sane enough to know I wouldn't last half the distance. Here's a fifteen year old schoolboy who'll pace you. On your marks! Get set! Go! . . .

"Yes, old chap, it was rotten of the kid to laugh at you when you caved in on the last quarter, and your sprinting muscles wouldn't sprint. But you *did* make a show of yourself.

"Convinced, are you? Good! Then cut out that nonsense about 'feeling as husky as ever you felt!' A bankrupt can still feel like a millionaire—till he begins to write checks."

At Fifty—usually long before—a wise man realizes his body can no longer do the splendid things which once it could achieve with ease. He learns the true tragedy of that most tragic of the Bible's myriad tragic lines; the line which tells of the shorn Samson when he went forth with his wonted confidence that he could crush his Philistine foes by brute strength, as of old:

"He wist not that the Lord was departed from him!"

Not that Fifty is an age of decrepitude. But it is an age when a score of things which once were fiercely necessary are now merely desirable; and when no man but a fool will attempt to excel in athletics. Moderation must be Fifty's keynote.

True, at Fifty you can walk comfortably in the wake of a gutta-percha pill on the links. You may acquire or retain a very creditable stroke at golf. But that entails only a few dozen arm motions and a calm trudge over turfed ground.

Some big doctor has said a man needs no violent exercise after he passes forty-five. Some big doctor is right.

True, E. P. Weston walked innumerable steady miles on a stretch after he was seventy. But he *walked* them, remember. And walking is nature's own subconscious form of exercise. It lasts when almost every form of active endeavor has died.

A fat Wall Street man of Fifty went to Muldoon's and besought the master to put him in such shape that once again he could touch his finger tips to the floor without bending his knees.

"Sure," assented Muldoon. "I'll teach you to do it if you'll give me one sane reason why you want to do such a thing."

Then there is the matter of eating. This morning I had a glass of orange juice, a soft boiled egg, a thin slice of toast and a half cup of coffee for breakfast. The egg was added because I planned a five mile tramp with the dogs. My luncheon was toast and bacon. My dinner will be reasonably heavy. If it is *unreasonably* heavy I shall pay the penalty.

Twenty-five years ago my breakfast invariably consisted of fruit, cereal with much cream, a couple of big cups of coffee, some form of hot bread and two or three chops or liver and bacon. My invariable luncheon was a pound of blood-rare steak, a heaping dish of fried potatoes and a quart of beer. I ate a hearty dinner at night. And I ran a fast mile, directly after dinner, to settle the repast. Usually I wound up the day by a before-bedtime Welsh rarebit and a bottle of beer.

Only by exercise of memory can I make myself believe I ever ate and digested such hoggish quantities of food and drink. One month of that diet today would do unspeakable things to me.

Nor can a man of Fifty eat hearty and indigestible late suppers and drink all manner of things at them, as he could in the twenties and thirties or early forties. That, too, is past. His body can't stand it. Nothing tastes good enough at night to warrant next morning's pangs of indigestion.

It is still more the case with sleep. At Fifty we don't need quite as many hours of slumber a night as younger people like to have. Yet we not only need our sleep mightily regularly but we are prone to go to pieces if we don't get it. Said a fifty year old officer of the A. E. F. to me:

"I could fight alongside the younger men and I could march or starve or suffer alongside them. But I couldn't lose sleep as they could without feeling it. Two or three sleepless nights put me out of business. That's how I knew I was old."

So much for the liabilities of Fifty. The assets are fewer, but more worth while. For instance, when I was twenty-four years old and an athlete I undertook to write for three hours a night after my day's work at the office was done. In three weeks it gave me insomnia and ripped my nerves to ribbons.

At Fifty I can sit down to my desk five evenings a week, if need be, after a fair day's work, and can write steadily for five hours; and then sleep like a child and wake up none the worse for the toil. It is so with many another fifty year old.

In other words, the mind is stronger; the ability for steadily continued mental overwork is far greater at Fifty than at twenty-five. What we oldsters lose in body we seem to gain in power of mental labor. My mother, at eighty-eight, often spent nine hours a day at her desk, with no after-fatigue. At twenty-eight she suffered a severe nervous breakdown from much shorter hours.

At Fifty the mind is at its best. It may not be much of a mind. But such as it is, it is doing its strongest and most sustained work.

That is something business men may find it profitable to remember when they plan to discharge a fifty year old employee because he seems to be aging. And the employee will find it even more profitable if his boss will bear this in mind.

There is too much talk about the value of young blood in a business's routine departments. If you want a fine piano mover, hire a young man. If you want good and sustained brain work done, don't kick out the man of Fifty.



By CYNTHIA STOCKLEY

The Garden of Peril

Part Three:

THE spell was broken. She came kittening and cozening to his bedside next morning, dropping a tender kiss on him when the nurse had her back turned for a moment, full of solicitude for his languor, and of gentle chiding at the melancholy that had returned to his eyes. But the spell was shattered into a thousand atoms, as a crystal ball is shattered by the blow

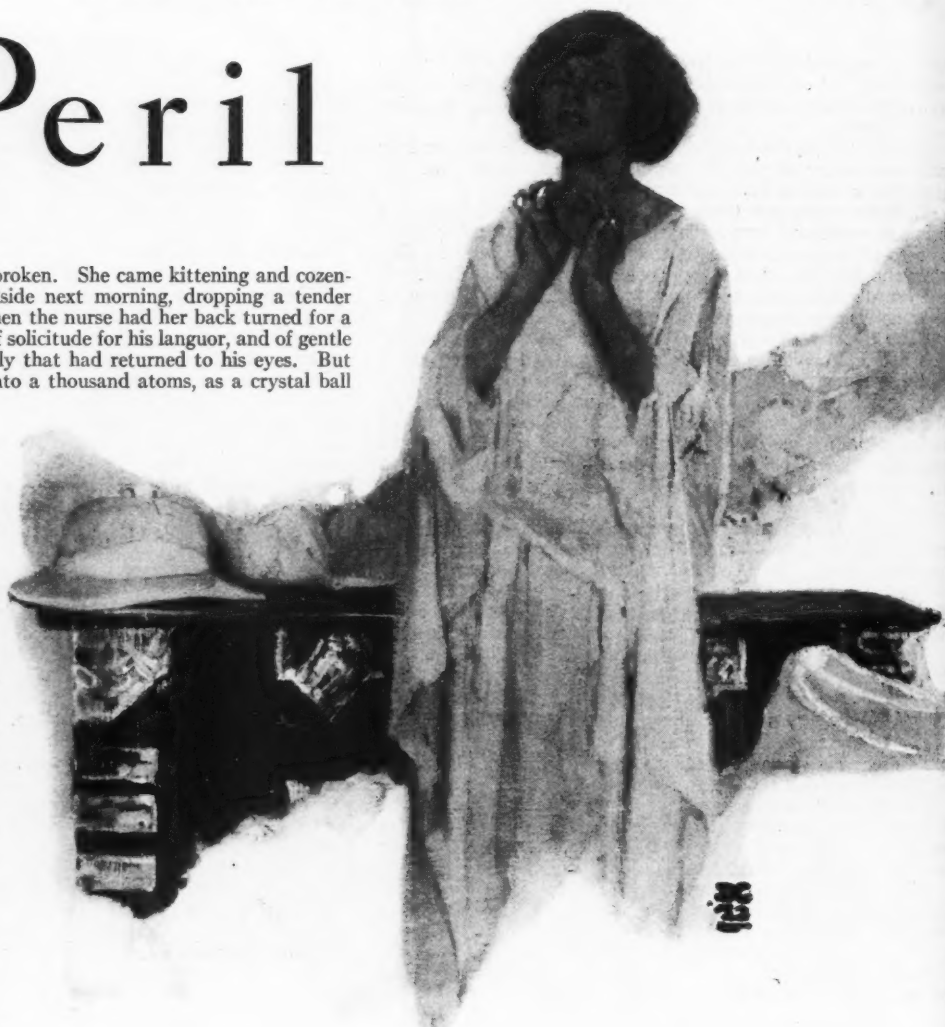
of a hammer. Those words that had burst from her lips during that strange scene the night before when she stood in the dining room, amid brightstains and broken glass—"What a fool you are!"—those haunting words possessed a ring of truth that he could not discern in these soft cajoleries of the morning.

Something unreal, too, rang in her brightness. Shades of deeper blue lay under the forget-me-not of her eyes, and lines of sleeplessness were scribbled about them, and well he knew she was not one to greet the dawn with smiles after a bad night. Yet she smiled and said nothing of wakeful hours passed. And there was a strange watchfulness in her glance. Even while she laughingly excused the previous evening's "access of nerves," the sharpness of the scrutiny she set upon him keyed his own jangled nerves to unbearable tension.

Consciousness was forced upon him of something going on under the smooth surface of things; something he did not understand. He did not want to understand it either, for it was disquieting, sinister, disintegrating. Fear of understanding it came at last to eat him more agonizingly than the rat at his vitals.

Some more desperate change, too, had entered into his bodily condition. Dissolution of his physical elements appeared to be occurring within him. His very viscera seemed composed of fire, and the marrow in his bones to have turned to molten liquid. Appetite had gone. Nothing remained except a burning thirst. But he did not ask for stimulant now . . . only water . . .

Bruce Kelly's concern and puzzlement was such that he spent almost the whole day in the sick room, sitting beside the patient to insure his remaining in bed, inspecting every grain of food and drop of liquid that came into the room. The injections for the first time were discarded. By six o'clock that evening he announced his intention of wiring for a consultant from Johannesburg unless the patient's condition had improved by morning. That, from Bruce Kelly, was admission of defeat, and his face looked terribly old and tired when he made it, standing by the sick man's bed, in the presence of Nurse Gordon and Doria.



But Pam only smiled rather wearily, and said he'd be all right. He did not know . . . particularly did not want to know what was wrong with his body. He only knew that the spirit of *joie de vivre* so recently revived in him had received a mortal blow; that dreams were composed of dust, and ashes were the ordained fare of fools.

Nevertheless, when morning came he seemed a shade better, and after that from day to day an improvement, almost infinitesimal yet enough to satisfy Doctor Kelly, was maintained. After that things went on much as usual, only that the patient was quieter than he had ever been, uncomplaining, gentle with his wife, obedient to his nurse, but with the last spark of his old fire dashed out and dead. There were no more sloe gins and sundowners, naturally. Impossible under the circumstances to dodge Doctor's orders, even had Pam or his wife been so inclined. But indeed Doria, when they were alone together, had explicitly renounced "the game"; for a while.

"We must give Doctor Kelly the reins now," she said, "and see if you are the better for it. If not—well, of course, darling, I think he's wrong, and as soon as you feel able to take your little drinks again I am quite ready to abet you in what I am sure cannot be bad for you."

It was not long before Pam got to his feet again, being one of those who openly averred a preference for walking to the gates

*A
New Novel
of
South
Africa
by the Author of
"Ponjola"*

*Illustrations by
Dean Cornwell*



Bruce Kelly's face looked terribly old and tired as he stood by the sick man's bed in the presence of Doria.

of death rather than waiting to be wafted there on his back. The old order of things resumed, with Peril coming to read to him in the afternoons while Nurse Gordon took her two hours off and Doria aired herself in the sunshine. The latter, in spite of her dissension with Doctor Kelly, still continued to make his garden the scene of her rest cure; and one evening on her return, looking refreshed and happy, she carried in her hand a couple of little dappled primulas, which she openly admitted to having stolen from a big bed of them just out in all their spring glory. But as she went to fix them in the buttonhole of her husband's lounge coat, Peril gave a startled exclamation:

"What is that stain on your fingers?"

The girl leaned forward with an expression of anxiety unusual to her serene features, and just for a moment Pam Heseltine witnessed in his wife's eyes that expression of animal fright that once before he had seen, but so fleeting was it that almost he might have believed himself mistaken. Doria was laughing now with her hands whipped behind her like a naughty child.

"I'm a grub . . . I've been poking round your garden as well as stealing your flowers. Shameful of me not to have washed before I came in here!"

She fled on that, but when she returned Peril still wore a troubled preoccupation that did not disperse on Doria's casual recital of the purchase of a pomegranate from a coolie fruit

vendor, and the subsequent devouring of it in the garden and making a horrid mess of herself.

There is not really any need to make a mess of yourself when eating a pomegranate, for no fruit is more delicately arranged for dainty eating; and perhaps Peril was thinking of this when she walked home with knitted brows and a bewildered expression on her face. The Doctor was out to dinner that evening as it happened, so she had time and solitude for her uneasy meditations, whatever they were. Afterwards Valpy brought in the housekeeping books to go through with her. Just as Valpy was in the act of departing she remembered something else.

"Oh! and Mrs. Keable was asking me if I knew anything to take out stains, Miss Perrul. Her lady's beautiful sea-green tea gown is all a mess with sloe gin. I said I'd ask you."

"Sloe gin!" uttered Peril, arrested by the words and some correlation of ideas they aroused. Instantly she had a vision of Doria Heseltine leaning over the little gate of "the garden of peril," her handkerchief extended; her gay excited exclamations: *"What a heavenly color! . . . I must have some! . . . a sloe gin tea gown!"* Then she remembered the stain she had seen on Doria's fingers that very evening, and realized clearly at last why it had startled her. A little tense line like a cut showed suddenly between her brows.

"Did Keable tell you how it happened?" she asked slowly.

Doria uttered a hard, contemptuous laugh. "What horrid, spying people! Inventing fantastic nonsense! Really, Miss Kelly, I am surprised at you."



"Jest an accident. Mrs. Heseltine spilt a glass of the stuff over herself an' was in an awful rage about it nex' morning, insisting that Mrs. Keable shall get the marks out again. But as I tell her, Miss Perrul," continued Valpy in her soft, blurred Cape accent, "she never will. They look to me more like some of the stains you an' the Doctor makes on the labertery towels—you know what a business of boiling in soda *that* is. But you can't boil a beautiful Parus wrapper of sea-green silk, can you?"

Peril did not answer, and Valpy, enjoying the office of narrator, continued:

"It appears that it's all over the dining room carpet too. A nice fuss there'll be when the Mintos get back from Muizenberg

to their old Lodge!" She added with relish, "And a nice bill to pay for damages."

Peril was not listening to this chatter. The little line between her brows had turned into a deep groove.

"Bring me the tea gown to the laboratory, Valpy," she told the woman.

Pam felt a good deal better that morning. In fact he had been aware for some days of a sensible diminution in his physical misery. Besides, he knew from the gray pin point of acute intelligence in Bruce Kelly's eyes that that vaguish, stoutish, reddish man of medicine was more at ease as to the general condition of his patient. Could it be possible, after all, Pam

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"Will you give up the berries," Doria persisted quietly, "if I promise you to tell no one, to speak to no one about it?"

Heseltine wondered, that Life with long years in her hand waited upon him? And what was the worth of long years with only dust of dreams and ashes of hope to fill them?

"What is a violet, with no one to give it to?" Or was he wrong in thinking thus bitterly? Had sickness turned him into a jaundiced misanthrope full of foul and ungrounded suspicions? Had suffering poisoned his brain and distorted his mental vision into seeing guilt where only innocence was? On that morning of sweet autumn sunshine and mellow airs these were the questions he asked himself. At any rate, it seemed to him, after Nurse Gordon had settled him on the sofa and gone off on some urgent duty at the hospital, that the garden would be a better

place than this darkened room in which to think out and perhaps banish forever from his mind the dark and hateful suspicions that haunted it.

The house was very quiet. He met no one as on somewhat shaky legs he made his way out through the drawing room and stoop down the steps into the mild green and gold of the garden. But the sense of exhilaration with which he had started soon passed. Physical effort after days of prostration left him exhausted and he looked round for a place to rest, but nothing offered except a lopsided Madeira chair too decrepit to bear his weight.

Nothing to do but return slowly to the house.

He reached it on its left side, and spied on the stoop there an old Dutch settle of substantial oak, on which he stretched himself at length, hands under head and body at ease on the laced leather thongs composing the seat. Only then did he realize that he was right under the window of Doria's bedroom. He heard the rustle of her movements in the room above him, the little humming sound she often made with her lips when her hands were engaged doing one thing and her mind clearly occupied with another. They were very slight sounds, but somehow they made it impossible for him to concentrate his mind on those problems he had wanted to solve. Besides, he had grown suddenly very tired . . . so tired that he presently fell asleep.

That which roused him was a voice, tranquil yet with a grave note in it; a voice he knew well, speaking in Doria's room.

"I must ask you to give them to me, please, Mrs. Heseltine—those berries you plucked in the Doctor's drug garden."

Then Doria, a haughty edge of astonishment to her tone: "I'm afraid I don't know what you are talking about, Miss Kelly!"

But Peril continued, firm and steady:

"You see . . . Valpy saw you take the key of the drug garden from its nail inside the surgery window. Being curious, she went up to her bedroom and watched you go in and gather the berries. You must give them to me, please."

Doria uttered a hard, contemptuous laugh.

"What horrid spying people! Watching from windows—inventing fantastic nonsense and lies! Really, Miss Kelly, I am surprised at you—listening to servants' gossip!"

"No—not gossip. I called Valpy into the laboratory and questioned her after I had discovered a reason myself for thinking—"

"All I can say," broke in Doria impatiently, "is that you bore me with this idiotic story. It really doesn't interest me in the least to hear what your impertinent servant says, and I know nothing whatever about berries."

"You do know of berries, Mrs. Heseltine. Those that I once warned you of, in the drug garden—that they were a slow deadly poison. You said their color fascinated you—reminded you of sloe gin." Her voice suddenly became urgent. "Do give them up to me, please. There were just five left on the bush yesterday—before you went to rest in the garden—and now there is not one. You must give them to me."

"You are mad."

"Will you give them up if I promise to tell no one, to speak to no one about it?"

"I wish you would be good enough to go away," drawled Doria, coldly insolent. "You are boring me to the verge of tears." But there was no movement of departure.

"Then I must tell Uncle Bruce."

"Tell him!" cried Doria, suddenly violent. "Considering that he has been filling my husband with that very poison, and against my wish, I fancy he would have some difficulty in proving that I—"

She pulled herself up sharply. "Anyway, the whole thing is too fantastic. No one would believe you." "Oh yes they would!" Peril persisted quietly. "And there would be other things to tell. The stain on your fingers when you came back yesterday—after you had been plucking them. You said it was a pomegranate bought from a coolie—but pomegranates are not ripe enough for eating till the end of next month. Then—the silk gown on which you spilled the sloe gin, mixed with some other red stuff. I have that gown. Keable brought it up to Valpy for advice."

"How dare she!" Doria's exclamation rang sharp and furious. "And how dare you come here . . ." Her words died away, as though something she saw in Peril's eyes frightened her. Indeed, the girl's voice was cold and relentless now, like that of a judge arraigning a criminal at the bar.

"You see, I happen to know about drugs and stains, and I recognize the curious magenta juice of that poison berry on your gown. You must have gathered them before—when you went to rest in the garden! And for some reason that I do not know you made them into a liquid and mixed them with sloe gin. That mixture was spilled—I cannot tell under what circumstances. So yesterday you went for more berries, and took the last of them. What your purpose has been in all this I am not able to guess. I can only say that you will have to explain it to my uncle unless you give me those berries now, at once."

There was a heavy silence then, a silence that seemed to fill the room, pass out of the open window, slowly tumbling like a stone upon the heart of the man lying there. No more denials now from Doria. No protestations of anger or boredom. Just silence, broken only by the sound of someone breathing hard, long, deep breaths, in-drawn with a slight hissing. Then the

sound of a chair, dragging feet across the floor; a cupboard door opened and shut again with a sharp click; again the dragging feet. At last Doria's voice, flat, toneless, muttering incoherent phrases:

"This little bottle . . . I made them into liquid . . . I told you the color fascinated me . . . I wanted to experiment with . . . dye silk for a gown . . . only a woman would understand, of course. No doctor would . . . men are such fools . . . But you promised, didn't you, if I gave it up? *Not a word to anyone?* . . . That's all right, then. You see . . . he wouldn't understand how silly I am . . . about color . . ."

She was still murmuring disjointed phrases when Peril went. Pam, lying like one already dead on the old Dutch bench, heard a door close, and the girl's light feet pass through the house and down the garden. It seemed to him that that was the last kind and friendly sound he would ever hear in this world. Inside the bedroom Doria had begun to laugh. Trill after trill of silver chimes, jangled and out of tune, echoed through the house.

When Nurse left at three that afternoon for her "off duty" spell, she naturally supposed that Peril according to custom would be with the patient in a few minutes. Heseltine did not think it necessary to inform her that he had sent a boy to The Hill with a message to Peril not to come down until half-past five. The fact was that he had things to do in which he required neither help nor company; and when Nurse had gone he locked himself into his room and set about doing them.

He did not really anticipate interruption, for Doria, the only person with any right to intrude upon her husband's privacy, had not, since the morning's fit of hysteria, emerged from her bedroom. For some little time Keable, with flurried look, rushed back and forth, carrying alternate lumps of ice and jugs of hot water. But at length it was evident that emotion had exhausted itself.

A period of hush ensued. The victim of "nerves" rested. Fresh air, however, and an entire change of scene being essential to complete recovery in such case, Mrs. Heseltine, with the *savoir-vivre* that distinguished her and doubtless kept her young and fresh while others grew weary of living, proceeded later to arrange for this supplementary cure by having a cavalier rung up and invited to come after tea and take her for a long drive. It was just as Pam had finished writing the last of two difficult letters that he heard a racer belonging to the "Hon. Jon," purring like a tame tiger outside the front gate.

After the pleasant flurry of departure was over and the house all quiet again, he went to the box room to hunt through old trunks and portmanteaus for something he had brought from home but had never expected to need. Finding it at last, he hid it in the drawer of his dressing table, then lay down on the sofa to rest, for the exertions and emotions of the day had tired him out.

It was there that Peril found him when she came. She had brought with her a volume of Adam Lindsay Gordon's poems—now a special favorite of his—and he surprised her by asking at once for "Doubtful Dreams," a strange sad thing full of the anguish of a man's wasted days, and bitterness for bright hopes turned to ashes. Her glance tintured with distress flickered mournfully upon him from time to time as she read, but he seemed very composed, lying there listening with closed lids. When she had finished he spoke calmly.

"Peril—I want you to promise to do something for me . . . in case I don't last much longer."

She put out her strong little hand and laid it on his. "Of course I will do anything. But you mustn't talk like that, you know."

He smiled at her. "I only said 'in case' . . . and after all it's on the cards for any one of us . . . isn't it?"

"You are getting better every day."

"Yes, I know . . . but accidents happen in the best regulated families . . . You ought to humor a sick man, anyhow."

"Not in being morbid . . . but, of course, you can rely on me to do anything. Tell me."

"There's a man I'm fond of, and want to help . . . and supposing I were not here in the flesh . . . it's you who must do it for me. Do you understand?"

"But what—how could I?"

"If you saw him in what you believed to be danger . . . not to his body, perhaps, but his soul, his future . . . then you must put out a hand and stay him. Could you do that for me?"

She nodded, with troubled eyes.

"Even if it meant betraying a secret? No. I can see you are going to say no to that, so I won't press the point. Only



When he found her at last under the trees, Punch knew that all he had dreamed of was true.

remember this: it nearly always lies in some woman's loved and trusted hands to make or wreck a man's life. We Heseltines, for instance, are like that. We give everything into the keeping of the one woman . . . our souls, our future, our hopes of Heaven.

"So . . . if he delivered himself up into the hands of the *wrong* woman . . . well, you can see where old Punch would be."

"Punch!" At that the peace and grace of Peril's face was invaded; from the low forehead, like a bar of ivory beneath the darkness of her hair, to the base of her throat, color flushed and flooded her. "It is your cousin you are speaking of?"

"Yes—old Punch."

Pam, staring hard at the wild rose beauty awakened by the sound of his cousin's name, understood slowly, and then was

swiftly thankful. A great many things had become intelligible to him during the hours of this long day. It was as if for his benefit a Hand had turned on the awful searchlight of the Day of Judgment, revealing to him dreadful acts and the motives that had urged them. By that white, strong light he saw again the look in Doria's eyes and heard the sharp edge of her voice when Punch announced his departure.

Only too well now he knew the meaning of both. It was not very difficult to realize how much more desirable such a man as Punch would seem, compared to himself, in the rôles of lover, husband and Peer of England. The sequent happenings, then, ruthless, remorseless, crueler than the grave in their subtle and hideous contriving, were all quite logical. The whole plan of action and every move in it were clear as the noonday sun.

But Punch he exonerated from any share in it. The Heseltines fought clean and struck in the open. No poisoners and assassins in that race! And now when he saw that this girl with her white soul, the promise of mountain tops and untrodden wastes in her eyes, loved his cousin, he was glad with a great gladness.

"Yes, old Punch," he repeated softly. "If ever he's in danger, Peril, remember he's worth saving. There are big things in him. But often the bigger a man is the more completely is he wax in the hands he loves and trusts . . . And supposing they are the wrong hands! That is what you've got to watch out for. That is where I am going to depend upon you . . . Reach out if you see him in danger. Save him. Remember, you have promised that! And one more thing . . . I want you to take this letter and deliver it into his own hand when next you see him."

"But," she objected quickly, "you will see him first. He is sure to come straight here when he returns on the tenth."

"Ah—coming on the tenth, is he? You've heard from him, then?"

Again she flushed. "He wrote because he is bringing me a bush-baby. You remember when my little Evvie was killed . . . he was so kind about it, and he found me another up at Kafie . . . on about the tenth he said he would be here."

"That settles it, then. He's sure to come to you first. A man's not going to lug a bush-baby round while he calls to see his sick relations. So take the letter, and be sure to give it him if you see him first. And now, I wish you'd read me 'How We Beat the Favorite,' will you, before you go? Then I think I'll try and sleep a little before Doria gets in."

So, when she had finished that breathless narrative which some sportsmen think the finest racing poem ever written, Peril shook his hand and left him, for he seemed tired and desirous of being alone. Yet when she had gone he did not sleep. Instead, he took the book of poems and opening it again at "Doubtful Dreams" he set to work to copy one of the verses on a half-sheet of note paper. His hand shook and scrawled, but the task was accomplished at last. Then, very quietly, he went to the dining room, filled a little liqueur glass with sloe gin and carried it carefully to his wife's room. Placing it on the dressing table, just where anyone coming to the mirror would instantly see it, he laid the scrawled sheet of note paper on top of it. Then he went away to his own room.

Doria, returning from a forty mile an hour rush through the air, to say nothing of the exercise of bouncing over boulders and skidding against tree stumps, might reasonably have been expected to feel invigorated, if not refreshed. Instead, her soul was filled with detestation of her companion and an abomination of despair. The Hon. Jon, though a daring fool, and at his best with his hand on the steering wheel of a racer, remained a fool, and his callow adoration bored her horribly. Even while she listened to him she was aware of an ache that ate like fire for the sound of Punch Heseltine's voice and the sight of his eyes.

She had borne that ache with patience while hope stayed with her. But now! . . . Trembling just below the polite surface of things lay the memory of the morning's bitter happenings . . . the fear and mortification she had tasted . . . the future's uncertainty and disappointment! Her castle of hope, fashioned subtly with her hands and the bright instruments of death, lay in the dust. Broken, ruined, smashed—by a girl! She could not brook it . . . Oh God, she could not brook it! Fury and murder were in her heart at the thought. But fear was there too. She feared that girl. Ah! that was bitter.

How then should she feel refreshed by her drive, or predisposed to courtesies at the end of it? The Hon. Jon, much to his chagrin, found himself callously dismissed at the gate.

All she longed for was the privacy of her own room where she could throw off the gauze shroudings that sometimes came

near to suffocating her, breathe freely and plunge once more into plot and counterplot. That she would have to go slowly now she knew well, walk warily, mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove as never before, wait long weary months perhaps for the fulfillment of the passion that devastated her. But she would *not* be defeated—would *not* relinquish her plan . . .

And above all she must cherish her beauty more than ever, for by that chief weapon she would still beat, beguile and burrow her way to triumph as Marchioness of Kenchester and wife of a man who set her veins aflame as no man in the world had done.

Her first act, then, on entering her room and throwing off her veils, was to approach the mirror, to examine her face and compute how much havoc the day's experiences had wrought upon it. Instantly, of course, her eyes fell upon the little glass standing there, with the paper laid on it. What was this? *Sloe gin . . . and a verse of poetry in Pam's writing!* Her face blanched with terror and guilty apprehension as she looked first at the one, then slowly read the other:

For nothing on earth is sadder
Than the dream that cheated the grasp,
The flower that turned to the adder,
The fruit that changed to the asp;
When the day-spring in darkness closes,
As the sunset fades from the hills,
With the fragrance of perished roses,
With the music of parched-up rills.

While she still stood there with the paper in her hand a revolver shot rang through the quiet house.

There are pink brides and blue brides; lavender, primrose and *eau de Nil* brides; but it is difficult to introduce any dashing variety into the trappings of widowhood and yet retain the sympathy of your friends.

Doria Heseltine, however, had always been unusual in coping with the conventional, and clever enough withal to make her way of doing things excusable, if not exactly acceptable to the crowd. Her decision, therefore, to become a white widow was not so severely criticized as it might have been with some women.

"You see," she gently explained, "one can mourn just as deeply for one's beloved clad in a cool white garment as laden with heavy blackness." She added pathetically, "Pam always loved me in white, and I feel it is a kind of tribute to him, somehow, to look as nice as I can."

She certainly succeeded. Her "weeds" were of a snowiness that was dazzling, and to say that she looked seraphic in them is to express the facts very mildly. The combination of a Florentine head of daffodil-yellow, blue eyes haunted by grief and the pearliness of a ravishing skin framed sorrowfully in the finest *crêpe de Chine*, composed a vision that few men could have witnessed without being stirred by uneasy longings "for the mystical better things," as the poet hath it. That at least is what the Hon. Jon thought, after catching sight of her walking in her garden at even. For of course she received no men visitors; received no one, indeed, except a few kindly women almost as overwhelmed as herself by the dreadful tragedy of a suicide happening in their midst.

Shyly they came, offering their sympathy to the beautiful *dame du haut monde*, and were touched and impressed by the dignity and simplicity of her grief. She seemed to them more like a tragic bride than the widow of tragedy. And when they left her they thought of her still, picturing her, beautiful and desolate, wrapped in her sorrow. For she continued to stay at Minto Lodge, inaccessible to all but the chosen few, hidden in her shaded and silent abode as the pearl of great price is hidden in the jeweler's case . . . until that propitious day when someone with the price on him shall come along!

People rather wondered at first why she should linger in Um-tété, marveling too at her "nerve" in continuing to inhabit that house of fateful incident. But it was given to few to compute the quality of Doria Heseltine's nerve.

One man at least knew its inflexibility and her strength of will to fashion circumstance to her desire. But that man tarried in his coming. Up beyond the Zambesi, work detained him that even the calamity of his cousin's death did not induce him to curtail. Fortunately his presence was not officially necessary, and the inquest had gone forward without him.

The last letter written by the dead man, and addressed to his doctor, had made everything dramatically simple. In it he set forth his gratitude for all that (Continued on page 176)

By FRANK R. ADAMS

A
Story
of Love
in the City
of a
Thousand
Tongues

Scandal Street

Illustrations by
Charles D. Mitchell

Work at this studio will be suspended today, Thursday, March 22, on account of the death of Harrison Halliday. Services at the chapel of Grey and Craigin, Morticians, at 10 A. M. tomorrow.

THE camera man and the extra girl happened to be standing side by side as they read the notice. They were early. Extra people very often are early, especially if they need employment rather badly, as this one did. "Funny," growled the camera man, "to close the entire Keeley-Kane Studio for the funeral of that guy—and right near the finish of the biggest picture we ever filmed, too. It'll cost ten thousand bucks to lay off this outfit for two days like that. And the sun is shining perfect for the location stuff that is scheduled."

The extra girl was not worried much about the sun. She was wondering if she would get paid for the lay-off. Still, she replied, just to register interest, "I don't even know who Harrison Halliday is."

"You wouldn't, probably," conceded the man. "He isn't around the studio much. We used him mostly on location. He's the guy who doubles for Neil Keeley in all the rough stuff. Nice, quiet chap but nobody to hold much of a funeral over at that."

The notice closing the studio for the day had just been posted by Sol Friedman, president and general manager of Keeley-Kane Productions, Inc. He had stuck it up with four or five thumb tacks and had then hurried away like a man who has a guilty secret to hide.

Mr. Friedman was not feeling absolutely top-hole that bright sunshiny morning. For one thing he had not been in bed since the morning before.

At eleven forty-five P. M. he had been called to the telephone just as he was undressing.

"This is Stewart."

"Yes. Anything wrong?"

"He's dead."

"Good Lord, no!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Call me," she told Harrison, "either Cora or May, unless you want to make up a sweet nothing of your own."

"Listen, chief. This ain't going to sound right over the telephone. Better come out here pronto yourself. I'm the only one that knows it yet."

Friedman reflected. "All right. Where?"

"Pick me up on the Coast Highway north of town about six or seven miles out. I'll be looking for your car and flag you."

Sol Friedman put his clothing back on his round little body and went out to his garage. His roadster would be the fastest and he usually drove that car himself anyway.

His ordinarily resourceful mind was fighting a blank wall for the time being. He did not yet quite comprehend the situation.

The man who had called him on the telephone was William Stewart, ex-sergeant of police and now a private detective, whom Friedman himself had hired as a sort of special bodyguard for Neil Keeley, the biggest financial craft that Friedman had ever piloted.

No names had been mentioned over the telephone but the little manager knew that the "he" referred to must be Neil Keeley himself.

Dead! It was incredible. Friedman did not want to believe it.

Not that he was so fond of Keeley. On the contrary, he, in common with nearly everyone else on the lot, rather cordially disliked the handsome star. For one thing, there was the way he treated his wife, who had elevated him from mediocrity when she had married him and given him the chance he would never have had otherwise. And there was no denying the fact that his riotous escapades had caused more than one of the white hairs that fringed Friedman's bald spot.

But even though it was not a cause for inconsolable personal grief, there were many reasons why Keeley's taking off just at that time was as crushing a blow as the loss of Friedman's right arm would have been.

The Keeley-Kane production of "The Idylls of the King" was two-thirds completed with Neil Keeley as Lancelot. A million and a quarter dollars, many of them Sol Friedman's own, were already tied up in the production. A tremendous advance publicity campaign had been under way for nearly a year and motion picture fans all over the world had been keyed up to expect something rather extraordinary.

Some of the most expensive sets had been demolished in order to make room on the lot for others needed in later sequences. They would all have to be rebuilt in case it were necessary to shift another star into the principal rôle.

All in all the loss of the principal player just at that time was practically the same as the finish of Sol Friedman's career, too.

He had plenty of time to think that all out before he arrived.

Stewart, standing in the middle of the road, was stopping all north bound cars until he found his employer.

"Well?" demanded Sol Friedman. He had his poker face on now and was not going to admit to anyone how much he was disturbed.

"He's over here in the ditch," the detective replied, "under a car. It's just where your headlights miss it as you go around that turn so nobody's seen it yet but me. I wouldn't have noticed it either except that I was only a few hundred yards behind and saw them go over."

"Them? The other one was a woman?"

"Yeh."

"She killed, too?"

"No, not hurt much, I guess. Anyhow she beat it and I haven't seen her. I thought it was more important to notify you than to trail her."

They had arrived at the wreck. The detective had a flashlight so they were able to see it distinctly.

"Why, this isn't Neil Keeley's car," Friedman declared.

"No," the detective admitted, "this is one of those you rent for fifty cents an hour downtown. But Keeley always does that when he's going on a party. Thought I'd reported it. The first time he did it he fooled me because I was looking for his big flashy bus. He leaves his own car at one garage and walks a block to another, where he rents this cheap outfit that looks like every other car you see anywhere. I ain't had no trouble trailin' him since I got wise to the trick. I know where he goes and everything. I didn't recognize this Jane though. Mebbe she's a new one or else she's got on a different hat or something. Your orders was merely to keep an eye on him and help if he got into a scrap."

"Yes, that's right." Sol Friedman was thinking of something else by that time. "I'm going back to town. You stay here long enough to cut the name tags out of his clothes and remove any identifying papers. Then go home and go to bed. Keep your mouth shut and report to me at noon."

"Gee, boss, what are you going to do?"

"I'm not sure yet myself, Stewart, but whatever it is you're going to be one of the few men in the world who will be 'in the know,'" said Friedman.

Friedman did not call up but went directly to Neil Keeley's home. Mrs. Keeley, or Sheila Kane as the world knew her,



Sheila

had gone to bed but was not sleeping and came down herself in a dressing gown to answer Friedman's pounding on the door.

"I thought it was Neil," she explained. "He usually loses his key."

Sol Friedman was not a very tactful man and he confronted the task of breaking the news to Sheila with an overwhelming sense of his own shortcomings in that line.

Sheila was so little, so young looking, so elflike in the impression she made upon one, that it seemed quite probable that she would not be able to support the contact with sordid tragedy.

Still, she had lived with Neil Keeley for two years. She must know something of sorrow. Her eyes said so, anyway. Perhaps it was only the dim light in the reception hall that made them appear so large and so sad.

So he told her, simply, directly, in the only language that he knew, the language of business.

"The biggest money making star in the film business was killed tonight and—"

"Neil?" Unerringly.

"Yes."

"That woman shot him?"

"Why no," Friedman replied, puzzled. "You were expecting something of the sort, then?"

"I had warned him to be careful," she said unemotionally. "I'm very sorry for Neil."

"Aren't you sorry for yourself?"

"I suppose so. But part of me has been dead a long time so I don't feel things so much any more. But Neil wasn't ready to go yet. There was much he had to do—"

"You said it. The King Arthur story ain't over two-thirds finished."

"I wasn't referring to the film."

"Mebbe not but we might as well because that's the reason I came myself to talk to you instead of sending somebody else or telephoning."

"Yes." Pleasantly. Her tone gave him permission to proceed.

"There's two or three reasons why this thing hurts like the deuce just at this time. You know what Will Hays says—'No more front page stories out of Hollywood. Clean up Scandal Street from Gardner Junction to Glendale.'"

"The motion picture industry can't stand another scare head. Enough is enough. We've got to keep off the front page or we're done for. We all know that. No more murders, no more dope, no more wild parties."

"Another reason is we've got over a million dollars in this film and if we put someone else in as Lancelot it will mean retaking almost all of it. Even if it was all done the fact that Neil was dead would queer it with the public. Neil can't be dead."

"But you say he is."

"Nobody knows it yet and you've got to help me keep 'em from knowing."

Harrison Halliday brought his high hopes West with the avowed intention of making a name that would be blazoned in electric lights before most of the theaters in America.



Sheila swayed to the music like a charmed cobra. She was beautiful, she was sweet and she was enticing. On the gentle current of the vanishing melody she floated to Harrison and dropped at his feet.



Halliday had reason to expect to make good. He was not an inexperienced movie-struck youth. On the contrary, he came from four generations of actors. His grandfather had once been the idol of Broadway. There were traditions back of Halliday, fine ones, even if the name had been slightly forgotten in the press of more recent luminaries. Still, there was no reason why Harrison couldn't put the patronymic back in the public eye. He knew how to act, he was good looking, well built and had a pleasing personality.

But when he arrived in Hollywood he ran into a distressing situation.

He looked so much like Neil Keeley that everybody laughed when he asked for a job, and then, when he proved that he wasn't Neil, they refused to employ him on the ground that it would seem as if they were trying to cash in on an imitation.

At the end of six months Harrison Halliday was down to one meal a day at a lunch counter and one suit of clothes that was beginning to lose that look of smartness so necessary to one seeking employment, especially in the show business.

There were unhappy times in the motion picture industry, anyway. People had less money to spend for amusements and even the inexpensive neighborhood theaters failed to catch them. Many studios shut down.

The Keeley-Kane production of "The Idylls of the King" proved a blessing to the entire industry because it used such a tremendous cast of players and literally thousands of extra people.

Quite naturally Harrison Halliday, in his rounds, landed at the Keeley-Kane studios with sickening regularity. He seemed to be one of the few men in Hollywood who could not get a job even there. It was that confounded resemblance again. They didn't dare use him even in a mob scene for fear it would confuse the audience.

And then came the curious chance. They were filming some tournament scenes and the actor who was doubling for Neil Keeley in the tilting got a very mean fall while they were rehearsing. Not to go ahead with the camera work on that particular scene meant laying off a great many actors who were called, and the great Fenway, who was directing, got distinctly temperamental about it. "Get me somebody else and get him quick!" he demanded.

And the message was carried duly to the casting director, who was just on the point of yanking out another wisp of hair when his eye fell on Harrison Halliday about to pester him again.

"Can you ride?" the casting director demanded.

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CHARLES MITCHELL

"If we plant your papers on him, Halliday, there won't be any trouble," said Sol Friedman, "and he will be buried under your name."

"I can do anything," Harrison declared optimistically.

The casting director grinned.

"I've been down on the rocks myself before now, but if you are willing to back that up by taking a chance on your life I'll tell you what you can do."

He told the young man what had happened and let him decide for himself whether or not he cared to make the acrobatic contribution to the cause of art.

Halliday decided he couldn't be any worse off than he was and asked to be introduced to the assortment of tinware that he was expected to wear for a winding sheet.

As soon as he appeared on the lot, Fenway, who had never seen him before, got good-natured right away.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "You look enough like Keeley himself so that we can take a medium shot of this fight. We can even show you in one of the rounds with your helmet off. That will put their eye out. Let's go!"

That was only the beginning. Whenever there was any scene that Neil wasn't quite up to, too many nerves or something like that, Fenway always sent for Harrison. Keeley detested Halliday and never lost an opportunity to sneer at his double's ability. But Fenway wouldn't give him up.

It wasn't in the least what Harrison Halliday wanted to do and it certainly wasn't building up any reputation for himself. But it was one way of earning bed and board. He was at the point now where that was essential.

It took Sol Friedman quite a while to find out where to locate Harrison Halliday. He went through the casting director's desk with all the efficiency of a burglar, with a flashlight, too, because

there was no particular point in attracting the notice of the night watchman to the fact that the general manager was prowling around in offices not his own.

He found the address and proceeded to the rooming house where Harrison lived, arriving about two o'clock.

There he managed to wake up the landlady and, without letting her know who he was, and allowing her to infer that he was drunk, he got the young man out to his car.

In the street Friedman demanded brusquely, "You know who I am, don't you?"

"Yes."

"All right. Have you any papers in your pockets that will identify you?"

"Why"—in surprise—"yes, I guess so, a letter or two and a driver's license."

"Good, come with me."

Mystified and slightly awed Harrison Halliday took his seat beside the man who could make or break a star on twenty-four hours' notice. Friedman did not say where he was going and Halliday did not ask. His wonderment was not abated when the car drew up before Neil Keeley's quarter-million dollar bungalow. Sheila Kane admitted them.

"Now," Sol began when they were seated in the big star's living room, "you want to get ahead in the motion picture game, don't you?"

"Why, naturally," Harrison replied.

"Well, your chance has come, then. Neil Keeley is dead and you're going to take his place until we finish 'The Idyls of the King'."

"But," objected Harrison, "how can we do that?"

"Well," Sol returned, "I'm not absolutely positive we can, but there seems to be a good chance. Nobody knows he is dead yet but just we who are here and one private detective who is in my employ. Neil's body is lying out in the road six or seven miles north of here. It hasn't even been found by the police yet. It was an accident, and his face—pardon me, Mrs. Keeley—is not so easily recognizable as it was once. If we plant your papers on him, Halliday, there won't be any trouble. The coroner won't be very excited about it and he will be buried under your name. The whole thing won't get more than a paragraph in the newspapers. But you know what would happen if the truth came out."

"What do you say? I am not positive that it will work but there is a chance for you and for me both. I'll give you Keeley's salary, which is something scandalous for size as you probably know, and then when it is over I'll see that you get another good job. It is the one way to make good in a game that you haven't got a chance in the world of succeeding at otherwise."

Harrison was silent, debating the proposition.

Sheila Kane took a hand in the discussion for the first time. Her voice was a little high and shrill. "I trust, Mr. Halliday, you will pardon me if I ask you to come to some sort of a decision as soon as possible. I will do whatever I can to help you in any way, shape or manner, but"—she faltered—"it isn't going to be easy for me, you know, and even right now I don't think I can stand much more."

She had stood up and her fists were clenched as if she were repressing a scream. It was quite obvious that she was laboring under a mental strain, a cumulative strain that had been building up for weeks. She appeared very frail, very white, all spiritual, not a creature of flesh and blood at all. Her face was colorless with a sharp black frame of hair and two dim coals for eyes. Her ultimatum delivered, she swayed slightly and the two men jumped to catch her lest she fall. She straightened herself with a hand on the arm of each.

"I am quite all right," she said. "Thank you."

Sol Friedman looked across questioningly at the young actor.

"What do you say?"

Harrison hesitated a moment.

"I'll try it," he said.

"Good! Sheila, go to bed! Sleep if you can, my dear. Have breakfast in your room in the (Continued on page 165)



A FAMOUS wit once confessed to a secret ambition to throw an egg into an electric fan. Very likely he will go through life with this wish ungratified, although gratification is easily within his means.

Another man, equally great in his line, was once seized at a large dinner party with the impulse to throw a stuffed tomato at the gleaming shirt front of the gentleman opposite. The more he thought about it the more the idea fascinated him. Perfectly aware that all standard books on etiquette are opposed to such quaint conceits, he nevertheless acted upon the impulse, greatly to the surprise of the gentleman opposite, who, however, responded in kind. Soon all the guests were likewise engaged and so continued throughout the salad course.

Very few people would have had the courage to act upon such an impulse, although nearly everyone has at times been tempted by other impulses just as bizarre.

Who has not been almost irresistibly beguiled—when the minister inquires if anybody knows just cause why these folks, etc.—into hopping up and shouting "He has a wife in Oskaloosa."

Who among churchgoers has not felt the urge in the midst of a drowsy, long drawn out sermon, to rise in his pew and wail plaintively, "Are you never going to end?" He would be echoing the thoughts of all present, but what a terrible uplifting of eyebrows there would be. His wife would speak to him about it after he got home—long after.

And surely it is fortunate, in the interest of the peaceful conduct of banquet programs, that people are taught to curb their impulses. There is always at least one speaker who forgets to stop when the stopping is good.

During the first ten minutes the banqueters listen with rapt attention. "Say, this fellow is a wonder." "The best after-dinner talk I've ever heard."

At the end of twenty minutes they are beginning to look around to see how the others are taking it. At thirty minutes they are thinking, "Why doesn't he stop?" and at thirty-five the back tables are buzzing with conversation, the worried toastmaster is pounding for order, watches are snapping shut with meaning clicks and every white shirt front covers a black impulse to shout "For heaven's sake, sit down!"

And yet if any one of those present, with the courage of his convictions, were to arise and sing out those welcome words, steps would be taken by the banquet committee to insure his absence at ensuing functions.

Once a distinguished gentleman had seen the new year in at a fashionable restaurant and was starting for a less dignified eating place where there was a prospect of seeing a good deal more of the new year in. As he wove his way out between



CRAZY

Words and JOHN T.

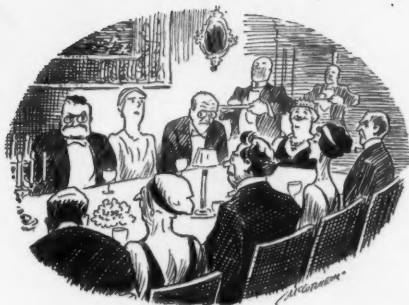
the crowded tables, a large lady's expansive and aristocratic back arrested his attention. It gleamed invitingly at a moment when resistance was at its lowest ebb. There was no chance for a sober second thought, or even a sober first one.

He hauled back and slapped with a resounding smack, contrary to all rules of etiquette, for he didn't even know the lady.

Pandemonium broke loose. If it had happened a hundred years ago he would have been dated up for duels every morning for a week, Sunday included.

By good fortune he escaped to the street and is alive and well today.

Here was an impulse gone wrong, and yet for one delirious fraction of a second he must have enjoyed the realization of it. Many impulses spring from a real desire to effect good in the world, such as cutting short long-winded speeches and sermons; others are more or less ignoble, and should rightly be choked at the source, for example, the one just quoted. Still others are inspired by simple curiosity to see what will happen under such and such circumstances—such as pouring a glass of near beer into a base horn when it is in action or sticking a pin into a



Impulses

Pictures by
McCUTCHEON

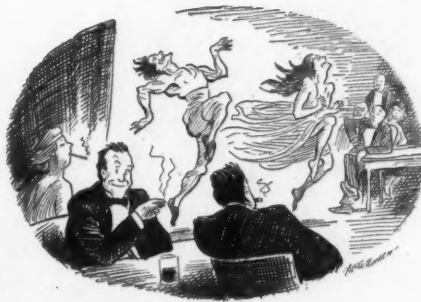
pompous gentleman who is bowing before the king.

In giving dinner parties the hostess is always careful that no discordant elements are included at the same dinner. Mrs. Blank, recently divorced with sensational publicity, is not to be asked with her late husband. Political rivals and social feudists never confront one another across the table of an intelligent hostess.

But who, in planning a dinner party, has not been momentarily intrigued by the fascinating possibilities of a dinner table surrounded by the most discordant elements, the Honorable Bunk with the editor who has been crucifying him, the young lady and the man she has heartlessly jilted, the capitalist and the Red.

It would be a most interesting occasion, but the hostess would have to be a composite of Lucretia Borgia and a full grown East Indian rhinoceros, I am afraid, to pull it off.

What employee, smarting under a scathing call-down by his employer, has not entertained the thought, "I'd like to tell him what I think of him, the big stiff." But somehow he never gets beyond rehearsals. In the quiet watches of the night he conjures soul-satisfying scenes in which he stands before the employer's desk, pointing out to



that cringing creature the limitations and defects of his character, ancestry, breeding and appearance.

This is one of the most prevalent but least vociferous impulses.

When watching one of these interpretative eurhythmic dances, the kind where the dancers wear a few yards of chiffon and in bare legs and feet impersonate a faun being

chased by a satyr or something, who has not idly toyed with the thought of what would happen if he tossed a tack or a lighted cigarette in the path of the prancing satyr?

The tack motif, although low-brow in its comedy aspects, nevertheless occurs frequently in conjunction with impulses. When the Prof. in closing his lecture on astronomy says that "The contemplation of the vast immensity of space so dwarfs our little world that one is enabled to regard petty earthly worries with philosophic calm—too petty to warrant more than a shrug of the shoulders" and then prepares to sit down, it occurs to you how easily a little tack could play havoc

with his philosophic calm.

Happily no one would dream of converting this thought to action, for the Prof. is a lovable old party.

Perhaps one of the commonest impulses is that which surges and boils within you at the opera where you have paid five dollars for the purpose of hearing the music. In the box near-by a party arrives in the middle of the second act. They are still full of conversation. "Sh's" greet them. Angry glances are shot at them, but glance off. A girl, dripping with pearls, is telling a chinless youth with plastered hair what she said to Gwennie and what Gwennie said to her.

Who, in this situation, has not harbored a martyr's willingness to pay the death penalty for the satisfaction of standing up and thundering as follows: "Blankety blank, blankety blank—xx!!--xx()-!!" supplementing this remark by grabbing the girl by the string of pearls and throwing her out the nearest exit to the alley below?

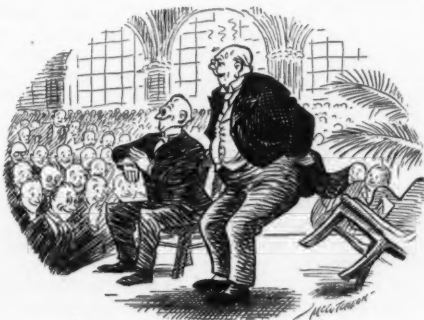
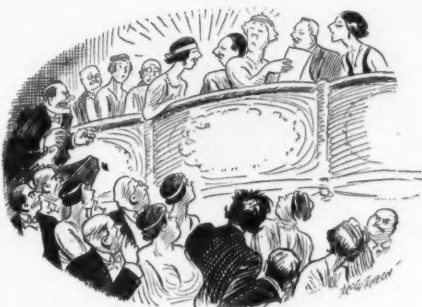
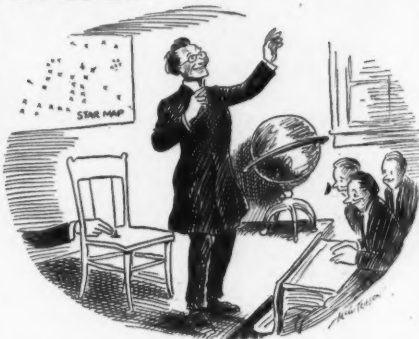
It is a crystal day in June and the graduating class is herded together to hear an address by a pompous old party whose life and works have put him on the first page in Bradstreet's.

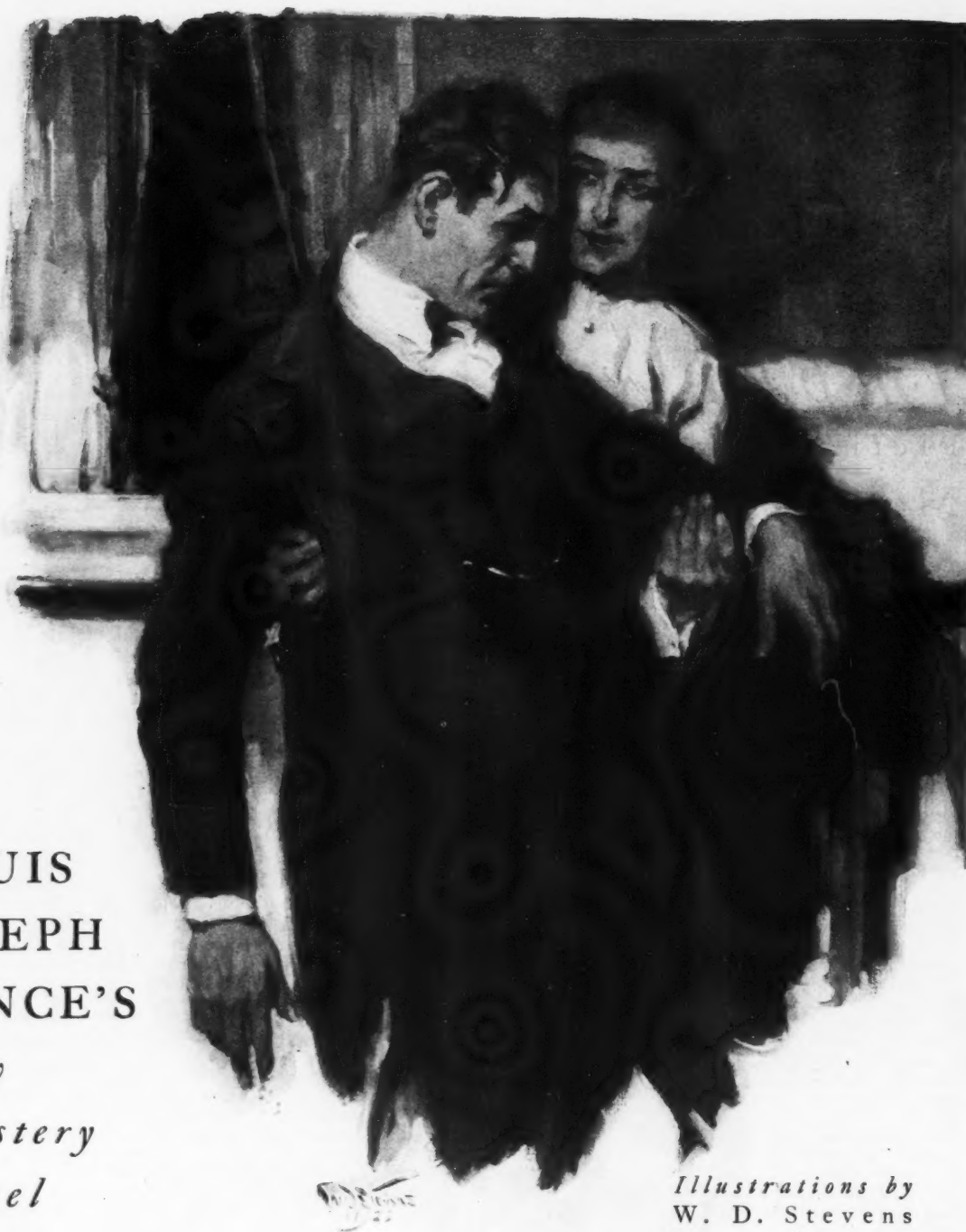
After Prexy has introduced the speaker as a man who, etc., the speaker arises and counsels honesty, perseverance, thrift, industry and character.

The new-fledged graduates drink it in, but you, made cynical by inside information concerning the speaker's business career, nurse an impulse to interpolate. His war profits are still awaiting action by the Department of Justice, his income tax report is a marvel of scientific evasion, his cellar is receiving frequent accessions from neighboring countries, his generous campaign contributions insure special favors in Washington.

Yet nobody pulls the chair out from under him when he sits down! There is dutiful applause, led by Prexy, who is hoping for a generous contribution to the endowment fund.

And so it goes.





LOUIS
JOSEPH
VANCE'S
*New
Mystery
Novel*

Illustrations by
W. D. Stevens

The Setting of the story is the New York of today and it concerns:

MICHAEL LANYARD, THE LONE WOLF, once prince of European jewel thieves, now a member of the British Secret Service on leave of absence in America.

EVE DE MONTALAIS, whom he loves as he has never loved before—a woman of beauty, of charm, of wealth.

MORPHEW, powerful New York bootlegger and director of criminals.

PAGAN, a satellite of Morphew's.

MALLISON, gentleman crook and member of Morphew's crew.

LIANE DELORME, demi-mondaine and one-time Parisian underworld acquaintance of the Lone Wolf.

MRS. FOLLIOTT MCFEE (FOLLY), a society woman, piquant, rich.

CRANE, New York detective, an old friend of Lanyard's.

A Résumé of Parts One to Four:

WHEN Michael Lanyard falls in love with Eve de Montalais, he believes that he cannot marry her because, despite his reform, he is a marked man on whom society will pounce at any excuse or none. But Eve will not listen to his reasoning; and he determines to make his life so blameless that nothing can come between them.

The machinery of fate at once sets to work against him. He accidentally meets Liane Delorme, who introduces him to Morphew, who in turn has been planning for some time to get Lanyard in his power. Morphew's proposal is that Lanyard go to thieving again under his, Morphew's, protection.

This occurs in the Clique Club, a drinking and gambling resort of Morphew's.

Lanyard, contemptuously refusing, escapes unharmed only because the place is raided. One of the raiders is his old



The Lone Wolf Returns

friend Crane, who passes Lanyard out with Folly McFee. He accompanies her home and warns her of the character of her associates, Morpew's crew.

But Morpew strikes back quickly, through Pagan, who with Liane comes to Folly's. Pagan mixes drinks for all, and apparently drugs the one for Lanyard. At any rate, Lanyard suffers from powerful delusions as he walks home, and falls on his bed unconscious.

Next morning he is awakened by Crane, who breaks the news that Folly's jewels have been stolen overnight. Crane has searched Lanyard's clothes and exonerates him of the crime. No sooner has the detective gone, however, than Lanyard finds the jewels in the tail pocket of his own dress coat; finds, too, that his shoes are covered with mud like that behind Folly's house. Were the emeralds "planted" on him? Or did he really steal them in a semi-conscious, drugged state? The question is an agonizing one he cannot answer.

He goes to Folly's that evening, slips in unobserved, sees Liane, Pagan and Mallison at dinner with Folly, goes upstairs and hides. There, by intercepting a phone call on an extension, he learns that Mallison has "framed" Folly for blackmail. Lanyard quietly phones Crane's office and leaves word for the detective to come to Folly's address.

Mallison leaves, but sneaks back (having fixed the lock) and also hides upstairs. Then when Folly, in *négligé*, is about to retire, he seizes her and makes violent pretended love to her.

As Lanyard hears Mallison's accomplices, who are to discover this compromising situation, at the door downstairs, he steps out, floors Mallison with a blow, and calmly confronts at the bedroom door a woman who pretends to be Mallison's wife, a "shyster" lawyer and a fake detective. These are, of course, upset by the turn of events; more so when Crane appears, searches Mallison, finds on him a kit of burglar's tools and Folly's stolen emeralds, and arrests the lot.

Folly is grateful, if mystified. At Lanyard's request, she phones for Morpew to call; and him Lanyard confronts with the tale of his foiled plot and the arrest of Mallison. In a rage, Morpew threatens Lanyard's life before the hidden witness, Folly.

Lanyard laughs, but he is not yet safe. Next day he goes with Eve to a Westchester inn for dinner, and there tells her all that has happened. As they talk he is called to the phone, where a long distance call, obviously from a proxy of Liane's, warns him—"Prenez garde"—take care!

He and Eve find their chauffeur drugged, but manage to escape from the inn in the car, driving at tremendous speed apparently unpursued; until a blowout stops them. They get out of the car, nonplused. Of a sudden gleaming headlights appear from the opposite direction; simultaneously a pursuing car, *driven without lights*, bears on them from behind. Lanyard flings Eve off the road—too late to save himself. The world seems to explode like a bomb; he is hurled into an everlasting abyss of night impenetrable.

Part Five: CHAPTER XV

PAIN that threatened to rend his head asunder played before his eyes in blinding flashes, like ragged lightning, crimson and soundless—or the man was deaf to its thunders whose every other faculty was numb in subjugation to sense of pain intolerable, who was faint with pain, sick with it . . .

Hands clipped his body beneath the armpits, a thin, far rumor of articulate noise pronounced some stupidity which he made no attempt to acknowledge. Arms, wrapped round him from behind, tightened, heaved, he was set upon unsteady feet. Then half carried, half guided to an angle of some sort and propped up in it, with arms resting upon its two broad, plane surfaces, elbow-high. A rudely genial voice volunteered: "There you are, sir, and no 'arm done. Now you'll do nicely . . ."

Lanyard wanted to tell the speaker he was a fool.

It was impossible for one to have come through that motor wreck, impossible for any mortal to have been caught between two heavy cars meeting head on in headlong flight, without incurring desperate if not deadly injuries. How reasonable that was this pain proved that racked him from head to foot, but more particularly his head, and made him want to retch, pain so intense it paralyzed the very instinct to complain . . .

His tongue temporarily refusing its office, Lanyard contented himself with a feeble grunt through locked teeth; and because his knees were as water, hung on with both hands to the rounded surfaces that met behind his back to form the angle, till presently the pain grew less, the feeling of nausea passed off, his senses renewed contact with their environment and flashed strange tidings to his brain in respect of conditions they could neither grasp nor accommodate themselves to . . .

Some moron had taken to amusing himself with the headlights of one of the motorcars, switching them on and off while they stared Lanyard full in the face at such close range that he was conscious of the heat they generated between the spaces of darkness. Furthermore, a storm of sorts had evidently sprung up out of that clear midnight sky; he remembered well how cloudless it had been just before the collision, how bright with mockery the gibbous moon; the boding calm which had bound everything in nature he recalled distinctly, too. But now a great wind was shrieking like a warlock, gusts of warm rain spattered the flesh of his face, the very earth beneath him was convulsed, bucking and rocking like a wild mustang, and the keen, sweet smell of the inland night had given place to the salt breath of the sea . . .

Lanyard opened his eyes, only to close them tight the next instant and shut out what was indisputably the delusion of a mind deranged; yet a vision so vividly colored and in every particular so circumstantial, stamping the retinae with such an impression of brilliance and animation, that he could not refrain from looking again, if only to convince himself of the sheer wonder of it—but half expecting his sight, on this occasion, to be greeted by another illusion and a different, if one quite as impossibly unreal.

He saw precisely what he had seen, and rejected, before . . .

A length of steamer deck, looking forward from the angle in which he stood at the after end of the superstructure, with deck chairs all folded and lashed to the inner rail and window ports all fast; its scoured planking now blue with the shadow cast by the deck overhead, now flooded with sun glare from end to end, as the vessel rolled heavily in a rough seaway. Beyond the rail a bright blue sky without a cloud, a horizon unbroken by any loom of land, a sea of incredible ultramarine creaming under the lash of a full gale, the sleek hollow bellies of its charging waves a-dazzle with the sun's spilled gold, its flying spindrift sprays of diamond dust . . .

Forward, opposite the entrance to the saloon companionway, a girl clinging to the rail, bobbed blonde hair fluffed out by the wind, filmy yellow sweater and brief sports skirt of white silk molded to her slender young contours, intent eyes turned aft to Lanyard. In the dark mouth of the door a cluster of men and women, likewise staring. Nearer and a little to the left a lithe young man of British cast, wearing a look of cheerful concern and the white duck jacket of a steward, with long legs well apart balancing to the motion of the vessel while he watched Lanyard.

Finding himself the target of the latter's blank regard, the man grinned broadly. "Nahsty tumble, sir," he cried in the penetrating pitch of a seafarer schooled to talk against the wind, and with an inflection that suited precisely his racial type, "and a wicked crack it did give your 'ead and no mistike. Like a pistol shot it sounded. Thought for a minute it 'ad done you in for fair, but it didn't tike long to mike sure you 'adn't broken no bones. 'Ow do you feel now, sir?"

"What . . ." Lanyard's voice in his hearing was attenuated and strange. His tongue felt unwieldy. "What . . ."

The figure in the white jacket waved a hand toward the foot of a ladder near-by. "You was comin' down from the bridge deck, sir—don't you remember?—when a sea 'it us and knocked you clean off your pins. 'Ad to 'ang on to the rail to keep from bein' knocked abaht myself."

Lanyard replied with a sign of exorcism, releasing the rail with one hand to describe it. At the same time he shut his eyes fast and made a determined effort to shake off the bondage of this fantastic dream. But when he looked again nothing had changed, the hallucination remained as definite and bright as ever, perfect to its last least detail.

"Feel a bit shiken up, don't you, sir?" The steward moved to Lanyard's side. "I don't wonder. But if you'll just tike it easy awhile, I think you'll find you ain't much 'urt."

Dumbfounded, Lanyard wagged his head, bringing about recurrence of its splitting ache, which none the less led to the discovery that, barring a bruised shoulder and elbow, a soundly battered head was all his damage. But this too he laid to delirium, as being a manifest physical inconsistency in one who had just taken part in a motor smash of the first magnitude. And wondering if exertion of will would bring this lunatic scramble of a world round to its right guise of reality, he fixed the steward with an exacting eye, the eye of a man who had made up his mind to stand for no more nonsense.

"Madame de Montalais," he enunciated distinctly—"is she all right?"

But demonstrably this wasn't the requisite magic formula; enunciation of it failed to do away with those unbelievably factual circumstances of a summer gale at sea and set up in their stead an autumnal nocturne of moonlit hills and vales. Its only effect, indeed, was to light a flicker of real solicitude in the steward's eyes.

"Beg pardon, sir—what was that you said?"

"The lady with me—was she injured?"

"But there wasn't any lidy with you, sir—you was quite alone, arf'w'y down the ladder, when the sea 'it us. I 'appened to be watchin' you, sir, though not 'andy enough to save you the fall, I'm sorry to s'y. But per'aps you feel strong enough now to let me 'elp you to your berth and fetch the doctor to give you a look over."

Lanyard in despair resigned himself; the world had gone stark staring mad and he was the maddest madman in it. Weakly he suffered the steward to take his arm in a respectful yet persuasive hold.

"Let me see, now, sir—what was the number of your stite-room?"

In unbounded amazement Lanyard heard himself reply without any hesitation:

"Thirty-nine."

"Quite so, sir. This w'y, if you please, and lean on me."

A door in the after wall of the superstructure admitted to a passage by way of which it was only a step to Stateroom 39. Here the steward considerably removed the passenger's coat and shoes and made him comfortable in a berth wedged with pillows, then hurried away to call the ship's surgeon, leaving Lanyard to wait in a temper of dull indignation, satisfied that he was being somehow sold by his ingrate senses, but quite incapable of understanding how. His head still hurt badly—there was a cruel swelling above one ear—and seemed to be utterly of no service other than as a container for pain-impregnated cotton wool that stifled every essay of his wits to seize the meaning of his present plight. After a while he gave up trying to think and lay looking round the room with resentful eyes.

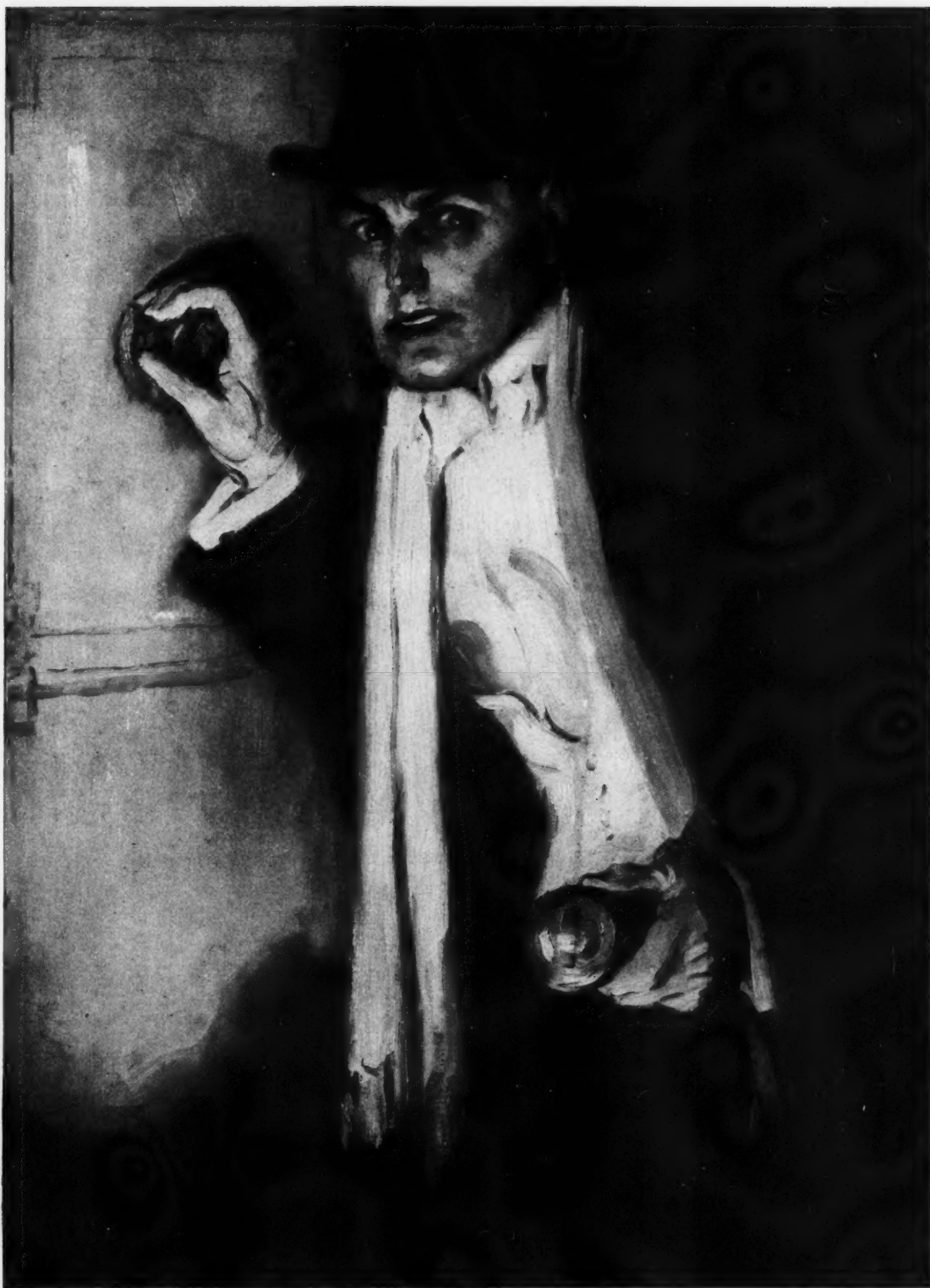
The stateroom had been designed and fitted to accommodate three people without crowding. Nevertheless it had every appearance of dedication to the uses of a single tenant. A solitary dressing gown and only one suit of pyjamas hung on the hooks behind the door. One assortment of shaving implements and other masculine toilet articles cluttered the shelves above the washstand. A lonely kit bag, obviously on its first voyage out of the shop, displayed the monogram A. D. None of these was Lanyard able to identify as property of his. If you asked him, he could swear he had never laid eyes on them before. But neither was he on terms of visual acquaintance with the coat which the steward had stripped from his shoulders and which was now oscillating like some uncouth and eccentric pendulum from a hook at the foot of the berth. A garment fashioned of the smokiest of Scotch tweed but with an incurably American accent, it gave circumstantial contradiction to the feeling that one had no business to pose as the rightful tenant of that stateroom; for quite as apparently one had had no business posing as the rightful tenant of that coat.

But the affair as a whole was past puzzling out by a head whose buzzing mocked every attempt at ordered thought; and with a sigh Lanyard gave it up for the time being, and shut his eyes to screen out refracted sun-glare on the white paint overhead . . .

Consciousness was on the point of lapsing when the door latch rattled and the inimitable cadences of a British public school voice hailed him with an affectation of friendliness whose falsity was more elusive, and yet somehow less successful, than it commonly is in the bedside geniality of the general practitioner.

"Ah, Mr. Duchemin! Been tryin' to butt a hole through the promenade deck, have you?"

Disguising instinctive resentment, Lanyard smiled amiably up at a new face that proved a good match for the voice, the



The photograph of the man at the safe door was an exact likeness of the Lone Wolf.

sanguine face of a young man, cleanly razored, set with hard blue eyes and an arrogant, thin nose. "Monsieur . . ." he managed to say, rousing on an elbow; but the effort caused agony to stab through his temples again and he dropped back to his pillow, groaning.

"Bad as all that, eh?" the other commented in a tone that somehow implied he wasn't being taken in. "Well! needn't punish yourself to prove it to me; I'm not fussy about fine points of etiquette. Lie still now, and let me have a look."

"You are the ship's surgeon, monsieur?" Lanyard inquired with difficulty because his teeth were set to stifle grunts as fingers deft enough but none too gentle searched out the sore spot.

"Well—I leave it to you," their owner replied in ironic patience . . . "Hm'm—worse than I expected. Miracle you got off without a fracture . . . Do you think I've been pullin' your leg about my ratin' these last few nights? Or d'you mean my luck at bridge qualifies me in your estimation as a card sharp

The Lone Wolf Returns

first and a seagoin' sawbones last? . . . Hold still, now, and don't try to answer; I'm goin' to sponge this noble contusion and decorate it with a becoming patch."

An interlude of acute discomfort came to an end with the announcement: "You'll do now, I fancy; but if I were you, my friend, I'd take it easy and watch my step till this hatful of wind blows itself out—which it ought to before long, goin' by the glass."

"Many thanks, Monsieur—"

A rising inflection made that last word an open bid for the name of the person addressed; who, however, chose coolly to ignore it.

"And now, if you don't mind ownin' up," he said with a clearer note of sarcasm, "what the devil are you drivin' at? Am I the ship's surgeon! Tryin' to make out a triflin' crack on the head has knocked you silly? Because it's no go, if you are; I may be the demon bridge player of this vessel, but I'm a good enough medico besides to know that, barrin' a beautiful bump, you're as right as rain."

It was anything but easy to school oneself to swallow such superciliousness of phrase and look; but it had to be done if one hoped to learn the inwardness of several matters.

"If you would be so good as to sit down one moment, monsieur," Lanyard suggested civilly, "assuming, of course, your valuable time permits—I would be most grateful indeed for your professional advice."

"Right-o!" The surgeon drew up a chair and settled himself in it with the manner of a man who didn't mind humoring a persistent child just this once.

"What's on your mind, Mr. Duchemin—more than your casualty?" he went on.

"To begin with, I should be glad to know the time of day."

"Why not consult that pretty trinket strapped on your wrist? Or was that, too, cracked by your fall?"

Indignation failed while Lanyard studied the timepiece to which his attention had thus delicately been drawn, with the more interest because, to the best of his knowledge, the watch, unmistakably a fine one, was none of his.

Through the concert of the gale three double strokes of resonant bell metal sang and were followed by a single. "Seven bells of the forenoon watch," the surgeon interpreted of his own accord. "Does yours agree?"

"Precisely . . . Monsieur," Lanyard said earnestly: "I should like to consult you concerning myself in strict confidence . . ."



The woman gave a start, drew back with a veering glance as if disturbed by some noise unheard

"Let the oath of Hippocrates comfort your misgivings."

"Then let me tell you something." After a brief pause Lanyard announced with a deal of true diffidence: "It is now some twelve hours, or little more, by my best reckoning, since I figured unfortunately in a motorcar accident on the Armonk Road, in Westchester County, thirty miles or so north of the City of New York."

"That's interestin'," the Englishman commented with a skeptical twitch of lips, "especially interestin' in view of the fact that we are now three days' run south of New York."

"Monsieur is not making fun of me?"

"No, thanks; that sort of thing doesn't amuse me as it does you."
 "But I am entirely serious, I assure you."
 "Haven't the slightest doubt of it. All the same, I'd give somethin' to know what it is you're so serious about."
 "Be patient with me another minute, monsieur." Lanyard devoted at least that much time to anxious thought. "Yester-

crash, hurried him in that condition back to New York, and caused him forthwith to be shanghaied.

"Seven months to be accounted for," he mused aloud, "seven months lost out of life!"

"Oh?" None but a Briton could have infused so much cynic incredulity into one lonely syllable. Lanyard flushed.

"Oblige me, monsieur, by believing that, between losing consciousness in that motor crash of November fifth and regaining it after being thrown from that ladder half an hour ago, I remember nothing whatever."

"Astonishin'."

"Even so, not—I believe—a case without precedent."

"Quite so."

"One is misled, then"—Lanyard's tone was as cold as his eye—"by an impression you give—no doubt without intention—of disbelief in my sincerity?"

The eyes of the Englishman winced, he colored in his turn, but with anger more than with mortification to find his unmannerly attitude so directly challenged.

"My dear Mr. Duchemin," he protested uncomfortably, "when you consider one has seen a good deal of you in the last few days, talked with you, dined with you, played bridge with you for hours at a time and found you always a man of entirely collected mind, no different from the man one is conversin' with at this moment, perhaps you'll agree there's some excuse for

one's bogglin' over a pretty tall tale on the face of it."
 "It makes me very happy to accept your apology, monsieur." Gravely Lanyard watched the face of the surgeon burn a deeper red. "And on my part I am truly sorry to think I have put too great a strain upon your charity. Yet, you must let me assure you again, what I am telling you is the simple truth. I am afraid I shall need time to get my bearings, and I would be vastly grateful for assistance."

"By all means," the other said in a stifled voice, "'m sure."

"It would help measurably to know what vessel this is . . ."

"The Port Royal—Monon Line."

"Ah! a fruit steamer, I take it?"



by Lanyard, then laid her finger to her lips, sprang up lightly and went to the port to look out.

day," he at length submitted, "was the third of November, nineteen twenty-one."

"You're going to have trouble, my friend, makin' that statement jibe with the log, which calls today the fifth of June, 'twenty-two."

Lanyard lifted a hand to beg for grace, and did the sum in his head while the Englishman sat watching him with what all but insufferably seemed to be contemptuous amusement. But one couldn't afford to resent that yet.

A double line deepened between Lanyard's brows. His first guess appeared to have been a poor one; the elapsed time proved that Morpheus hadn't picked him up unconscious after the

"Right; you took it for Nassau, Havana, Kingston, the Canal Zone and Costa Rica."

"I think you said we were three days out? Then we ought to be not far from Nassau now."

"This gale has held us back a bit, but we ought to make port by daybreak tomorrow."

"One can send a cable there, of course . . ."

Either a mistrustful mind deceived Lanyard or the Englishman wasn't happy in his efforts to disguise a thrill of keen inquisitiveness. "Of course; but why wait? Mean to say, there's our wireless at your service if you're keen to get some message off your mind, Mr. Duchemin."

"How stupid of me to forget." Lanyard's smile could be as charming as he chose, and he chose it to be entirely so just then, intent as he was on disarming one whom he had reason to think curiously hostile to him. "But then you will be indulgent, remembering the circumstances. One question more, Doctor—"

"Bright!" that person snapped curtly.

"Thank you. I am wondering . . . No doubt you saw me when or soon after I embarked?"

"Happened to be standin' by the head of the gangplank when you came aboard, in point of fact."

"If you could tell me whether that event was marked by any unusual circumstances, such as might possibly shed light upon the riddle of why I came aboard at all—"

"Sorry, but you seemed to be quite peaceable."

"Nothing to lead you to suspect I wasn't in full command of my faculties?"

"Rather not!"

"I was—alone?"

"Quite."

"Nobody to bid me *bon voyage*?"

"At least, I saw nobody."

"And my subsequent behavior has been, I trust, discreet?"

"To the letter of the word. If you mean your smokin' room habits, they've been above reproach—more than one can say of most Americans since the 'greatest country on God's green footstool' dried up."

"But I am not an American—"

"Never thought you were, Mr. Duchemin." Doctor Bright's sprained self-esteem was now convalescent. The eyes he bent on Lanyard were lambent with secret satisfaction, as if he knew something that Lanyard didn't, and found this proof of his superiority gratifying. "There's your name, for one thing. And then no American ever spoke such French; saw enough service in France to know the true Parisian accent when I hear it."

"Indeed? So I have found occasion to speak French about this vessel?"

"Rather. You've been at it daily, and a good part of every day, with the attentions you've been payin' the pretty lady."

Lanyard's eyebrows went up alertly. "Pretty lady?"

"Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes. At all events that's her style on the passenger list. Most fascinating and highly finished piece of work this tub has ever carried."

"Good to look at, you mean, monsieur?"

"Good to look at is a feeble way to put it. Every unattached male on board is balmy about her; and the attached ones aren't what one might call unconscious when she's in sight. And every man jack loathes you like fun because the pretty lady has a hospitable eye and you haven't given anybody else a ghost of a look-in."

"Beautiful and—shall we say—not ingénue, eh?"

"Look here," the Englishman laughed knowingly, "if you keep on guessin' so closely, I'll have to suspect your memory isn't as poor as you claim."

"It is true," Lanyard admitted with an air of perplexity, "that name, de Lorgnes, seems not unfamiliar. One wonders where, or when, one has heard it before, if possibly this lady is some friend of younger years . . ."

"Not this Comtesse de Lorgnes," Doctor Bright asserted in another turn of impertinence, "that is, unless the two of you have been playin' a game with me."

"Impossible, monsieur."

"Then you'll have to take my word for it—just as I took yours—you never met Madame la Comtesse before the first day out, when I had the honor of presentin' you—at her request."

"It must be an echo," Lanyard speculated, "that name—from some forgotten yesterday. I recall now—it is odd, I think—the number of this stateroom fell spontaneously from my lips when the steward who picked me up asked for it."

"Not really?" The surgeon had the laugh of one hugely entertained. "There's another point you've overlooked, I

fancy—your name, Duchemin. Feel quite at home with that, don't you? You answer to it readily enough."

"But naturally," Lanyard returned with the utmost naïveté. "Why should I not, seeing it is my name?"

"Well! there you are. Cases of submerged identity always go by another name while their first personality is in under the cloud. But you came aboard as André Duchemin, you admit you're André Duchemin now; and I dare say you were André Duchemin at the time of that motor crash, what?"

"Monsieur is quite right."

"That settles it, as I see it. You'll find it will all come back to you, everythin' you've forgotten, bit by bit as the shock of your tumble wears off. It would be an interestin' thing from a professional view point if this should turn out to be a true case of mislaid identity; but I'm afraid you needn't hope for that."

"Hope, monsieur!"

"Mean to say, you'll find it's somethin' much more simple and elementary with you. You've had a bad fall and a rap on the head that recalls a similar mishap several months old, and for the time bein' everything that has happened in between seems wiped out. But I'll go bail it will all come back to you inside of twenty-four hours."

"Why twenty-four hours?"

"As soon as you've had a sound sleep, that is—same thing. Let me send you in a powder, and by dinner time you'll be ready to apologize for tryin' to take advantage of my innocent and trustin' nature. What do you say?"

Lanyard said that monsieur was too kind . . . "But a favor, my dear doctor," he added with a tolerably crestfallen air. "We won't find it necessary to tell our fellow passengers what a sorry fraud I am, will we?"

"Oh, I won't be the one to expose you!" Bright replied with vast conceit in his ambiguity. "And you won't have a chance to tell on yourself before the sea goes down a bit. Meanin' to say, Madame la Comtesse is a poor sailor. But you see, your anxiety not to be made a laughin' stock to her proves that your memory is improvin' every minute."

"One wastes time trying to deceive you," Lanyard admitted with humility. "But there is one thing, I believe, that might aid my recovery—a look at the passenger list. Do you think you could by any chance find a copy for me?"

Contentment with his great cunning sustained this shock with poor grace; the surgeon frowned a frown of impatience mixed with mystification. Was it possible this chap still imagined he had found an easy dupe? But, one had to be diplomatic . . .

"Oh, very well!" Bright said shortly. "I'll have the steward bring you one with your sleeping powder. Though I must admit I don't quite see . . ."

Lanyard forgot to offer any explanation; and when the passenger list had duly been delivered and scrutinized was obliged to confess that he had exerted himself to no purpose. "Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes" was much too transparent an incognita for Liane Delorme; and the discovery that she was a fellow passenger had been excuse enough for the surmise that others of their common acquaintance might be keeping them company *en voyage*.

But if such were the case, the printed list of passengers gave no clue; no other name suggested a likely alias for Morpew, or Pagan, or Mallison, or . . . Mrs. Folliott McFee.

Neither did anything reward his eager search for a name whose music was like an old song singing in one's heart.

The list slipped from his grasp and joined the surgeon's rejected sleeping powder on the floor. Lanyard lay with a face that mirrored pain more real than that which racked his head, blindly studying the play of rainbow gleams upon the painted ceiling. Seven months lost beyond recall . . . And Eve?

CHAPTER XVI

WITHIN the hour thought flagged for sheer weariness of beating to no purpose against that wall of oblivion whose featureless façade sequestered seven mortal months of forfeit yesterdays, nerves grew weary of the zooming wind, incessant slap and slash of broken water streaming down the side, the tuneless crooning of the engines; Lanyard slept.

A noise of light knuckles on the door awakened him when the afternoon was old and wind and sea had both abated, as the muting of their deep diapason affirmed.

Without waiting to receive permission, Liane Delorme turned the knob and entered.

Most adept of actresses, she carried herself now with an air of delicate audacity that would have (Continued on page 136)

*An Exploit of
Ukridge,
The Incurable
Optimist,
By*

P. G. WODEHOUSE

The Début of Battling Billson

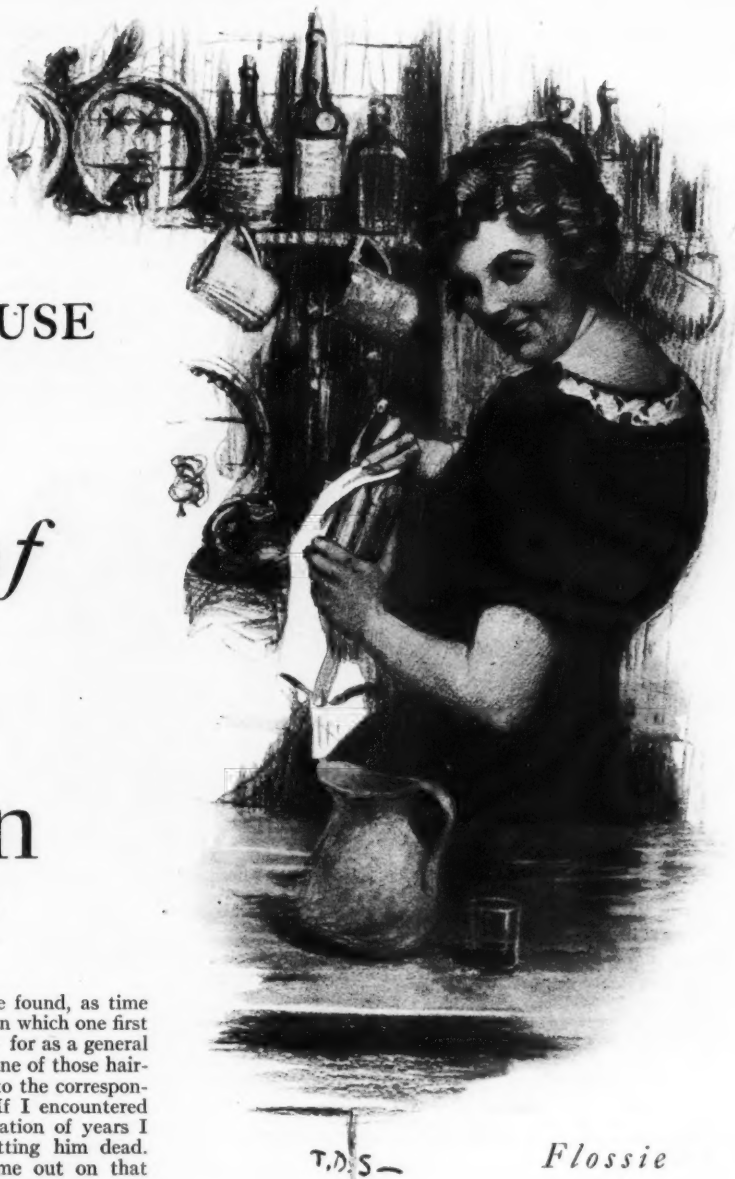
*Illustrations by
T. D. Skidmore*

IT BECOMES increasingly difficult, I have found, as time goes by, to recall the exact circumstances in which one first became acquainted with this man or that; for as a general thing I lay no claim to the possession of one of those hair-trigger memories which come from subscribing to the correspondence courses advertised in the magazines. If I encountered Mr. Addison Simms of Seattle after a separation of years I should probably spoil his whole day by cutting him dead. Certainly I should not ask him how he came out on that granary deal.

And yet I can state without doubt or hesitation that the individual afterwards known as Battling Billson entered my life at half-past four on the afternoon of Saturday, September the tenth, two days after my twenty-seventh birthday. For there was that about my first sight of him which has caused the event to remain photographically lined on the tablets of my mind when a yesterday has faded from its page. Not only was our meeting dramatic and even startling, but it had in it something of the quality of the last straw, the final sling or arrow of outrageous Fortune. It seemed to put the lid on the sadness of life.

Everything had been going steadily wrong with me for more than a week. I had been away, paying a duty visit to uncongenial relatives in the country, and it had rained and rained and rained. There had been family prayers before breakfast and bezique after dinner. On the journey back to London my carriage had been full of babies, the train had stopped everywhere and I had had nothing to eat but a bag of buns. And when finally I let myself into my lodgings in Ebury Street and sought the soothing haven of my sitting room, the first thing I saw on opening the door was this enormous red-headed man lying on the sofa.

He made no move as I came in, for he was asleep; and I can best convey the instantaneous impression I got of his formidable physique by saying that I had no desire to wake him. The sofa



Flossie

was a small one, and he overflowed it in every direction. He had a broken nose, and his jaw was the jaw of a Wild West motion picture star registering determination. One hand was under his head; the other, hanging down to the floor, looked like a strayed ham congealed into stone. What he was doing in my sitting room I did not know, but, passionately as I wished to know, I preferred not to seek first-hand information. There was something about him that seemed to suggest that he might be one of those men who are rather cross when they first wake up. I crept out and stole softly downstairs to make inquiries of Bowles, my landlord.

"Sir?" said Bowles, in his fruity ex-butler way, popping up from the depths accompanied by a rich smell of finnan haddie.

"There's someone in my room," I whispered.

"That would be Mr. Ukridge, sir."

"It wouldn't be anything of the kind," I replied with asperity. I seldom had the courage to contradict Bowles, but this statement was so wildly inaccurate that I could not let it pass. "It's a huge, red-headed man."

"Mr. Ukridge's friend, sir. He joined Mr. Ukridge here yesterday."

"How do you mean, joined Mr. Ukridge here yesterday?"

"Mr. Ukridge came to occupy your rooms in your absence, sir, on the night after your departure. I assumed that he had

The Début of Battling Billson



What this enormous red-headed man was doing in my sitting room I did not know. Passionately as I wished to know, I preferred not to seek first-hand information.

your approval. He said, if I remember correctly, that 'it would be all right.'

For some reason or other which I had never been able to fathom, Bowles's attitude towards Ukridge from their first meeting had been that of an indulgent father towards a favorite son. He gave the impression now of congratulating me on having such a friend to rally round and sneak my rooms when I went away.

"Would there be anything further, sir?" inquired Bowles with a wistful half-glance over his shoulder.

He seemed reluctant to tear himself away for long from the finnan haddie.

"No," I said. "Er—no. When do you expect Mr. Ukridge back?"

"Mr. Ukridge informed me that he would return for dinner, sir. Unless he has altered his plans, he is now at a matinée performance at the Gaiety Theater."

The audience was just beginning to leave when I reached the Gaiety. I waited in the Strand, and presently was rewarded by the sight of a yellow mackintosh working its way through the crowd.

"Hullo, laddie," said Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge genially. "When did you get back? I say, I want you to remember this tune so that you can remind me of it tomorrow when I'll be sure to have forgotten it. This is how it goes." He poised himself flat-footedly in the surging tide of pedestrians and, shutting his eyes and raising his chin, began to yodel in a loud and dismal tenor. "Tumty-tumty-tumty-tum, tum tum tum," he concluded. "And now, old horse, you may lead me

across the street to the Coal Hole for a short snifter. What sort of a time have you had?"

"Never mind what sort of a time I've had. Who's the fellow you've dumped down in my rooms?"

"Red-haired man?"

"Good Lord! Surely even you wouldn't inflict more than one on me?"

Ukridge looked at me, a little pained.

"I don't like this tone," he said, leading me down the steps of the Coal Hole. "Upon my Sam, your manner wounds me, old horse. I little thought that you would object to your best friend laying his head on your pillow . . ."

"I don't mind your head. At least I do, but I suppose I've got to put up with it. But when it comes to your taking in lodgers . . ."

"Order two tawny ports, laddie," said Ukridge, "and I'll explain all about that. I had an idea all along that you would want to know. It's like this," he proceeded, when the tawny ports had arrived. "That bloke's going to make my everlasting fortune."

"Well, can't he do it somewhere else except my sitting room?"

"You know me, old horse," said Ukridge, sipping luxuriously. "Keen, alert, far-sighted. Brain never still. Always getting ideas—bing—like a flash. The other day I was in a pub down Chelsea way having a bit of bread and cheese, and a fellow came in smothered with jewels. Smothered, I give you my word. Rings on his fingers and a tie pin you could have lighted your cigar at. I made inquiries and found that he was Tod Bingham's manager."

"Who's Tod Bingham?"

"My dear old son, you must have heard of Tod Bingham. The new middleweight champion. Beat Alf Palmer for the belt a couple of weeks ago. And this bloke, as opulent looking a bloke as ever I saw, was his manager. I suppose he gets about fifty percent of everything Tod makes, and you know the sort of purses they give for big fights nowadays. And then there's music hall tours and the movies and all that . . . well, I see no reason why, putting the thing at the lowest figures, I shouldn't scoop in thousands. I got the idea two seconds after they told me who this fellow was. And what made the thing seem almost as if it was meant to be was the coincidence that I should have heard only that morning that the Hyacinth had come in."

The man seemed to me to be rambling. In my reduced and afflicted state his cryptic method of narrative irritated me.

"I don't know what you're talking about," I said. "What's the Hyacinth? In where?"

"Pull yourself together, old horse," said Ukridge with the air of one endeavoring to be patient with a half-witted child. "You remember the Hyacinth, the tramp steamer I took that trip on a couple of years ago. Many's the time I've told you all about the Hyacinth. She docked in the Port of London the night before I met this opulent bloke, and I had been meaning to go down next day and have a chat with the lads. The fellow you found in your rooms is one of the trimmers. As decent a bird as ever you met. Not much conversation, but a heart of gold. And it came across me like a thunderbolt the moment they told me who the jeweled cove was that, if I could only induce this man Billson to take up scrapping seriously, with me as his manager, my fortune was made. Billson is the man who invented fighting."

"He looks it."

"Splendid chap—you'll like him."

"I bet I shall. I made up my mind to like him the moment I saw him."

"Never picks a quarrel, you understand—in fact, used to need the deuce of a lot of provocation before he would give of his best—but once he started—golly! I've seen that man clean out a bar at Marseilles in a way that fascinated you. A bar filled to overflowing with A.B.'s and firemen, mind you, and all capable of felling oxen with a blow. Six of them there were, and they kept swatting Billson with all the vim and heartiness

at their disposal, but he just let them bounce off and went on with the business in hand. The man's a champion, laddie, nothing less. You couldn't hurt him with a hatchet, and every time he hits anyone all the undertakers in the place jump up and make bids for the body. And the amazing bit of luck is that he was looking for a job ashore. It appears he's fallen in love with one of the barmaids at the Crown in Kennington. Not," said Ukridge, so that all misapprehension should be avoided, "the one with the squint. The other one. Flossie. The girl with yellow hair."

"I don't know the barmaids at the Crown in Kennington," I said.

"Nice girls," said Ukridge, paternally. "So it was all right, you see. Our interests were identical. Good old Billson isn't what you'd call a very intelligent chap, but I managed to make him understand after an hour or so, and we drew up the contract. I'm to get fifty percent of everything in consideration of managing him, fixing up fights and looking after him generally."

"And looking after him includes tucking him up on my sofa and singing him to sleep?"

Again that pained look came into Ukridge's face. He gazed at me as if I had disappointed him.

"You keep harping on that, laddie, and it isn't the right spirit. Anyone would think that we had polluted your confounded room."

"Well, you must admit that having this coming champion of yours in the home is going to make things a bit crowded."

"Don't worry about that, my dear old man," said Ukridge reassuringly. "We move to the White Hart at Barnes tomorrow, to start training. I've got Billson an engagement in one of the preliminaries down at Wonderland two weeks from tonight."

"No, really?" I said, impressed by this enterprise. "How did you manage it?"

"I just took him along and showed him to the management. They jumped at him. You see, the old boy's appearance rather speaks for itself. Thank goodness, all this happened just when I had a few quid tucked away. By the greatest luck I ran into George Tupper just at the very moment when he had had word that they were going to make him an under-secretary or something—I can't remember the details, but it's something they give these Foreign Office blokes when they show a bit of class—and Tuppy parted with a tenner without a murmur. Seemed sort of dazed. I believe now I could have had twenty if I'd had the presence of mind to ask for it. Still," said Ukridge, with a manly resignation which did him credit, "it can't be helped now, and ten will see me through."

"The only thing that's worrying me at the moment is what to call old Billson."

"Yes, I should be careful what I called a man like that."

"I mean, what name is he to fight under?"

"Why not his own?"

"His parents, blast them," said Ukridge moodily, "christened him Wilberforce. I ask you, can you see the crowd at Wonderland having Wilberforce Billson introduced to them?"

"Willie Billson," I suggested. "Rather snappy."

Ukridge considered the proposal seriously, with knit brows, as becomes a manager.

"Too frivolous," he decided at length. "Might be all right for a bantam, but . . . no, I don't like it. I was thinking of something like Hurricane Hicks or Rock-Crusher Riggs."

"Don't do it," I urged, "or you'll kill his career right from the start. You never find a real champion with one of these fancy names. Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Johnson, James J. Corbett, James J. Jeffries . . ."

"James J. Billson?"

"Rotten."

"You don't think," said Ukridge, almost with timidity, "that Wildcat Wix might do?"

"No fighter with an adjective in front of his name ever boxed in anything except a three-round preliminary."

"How about Battling Nelson?"

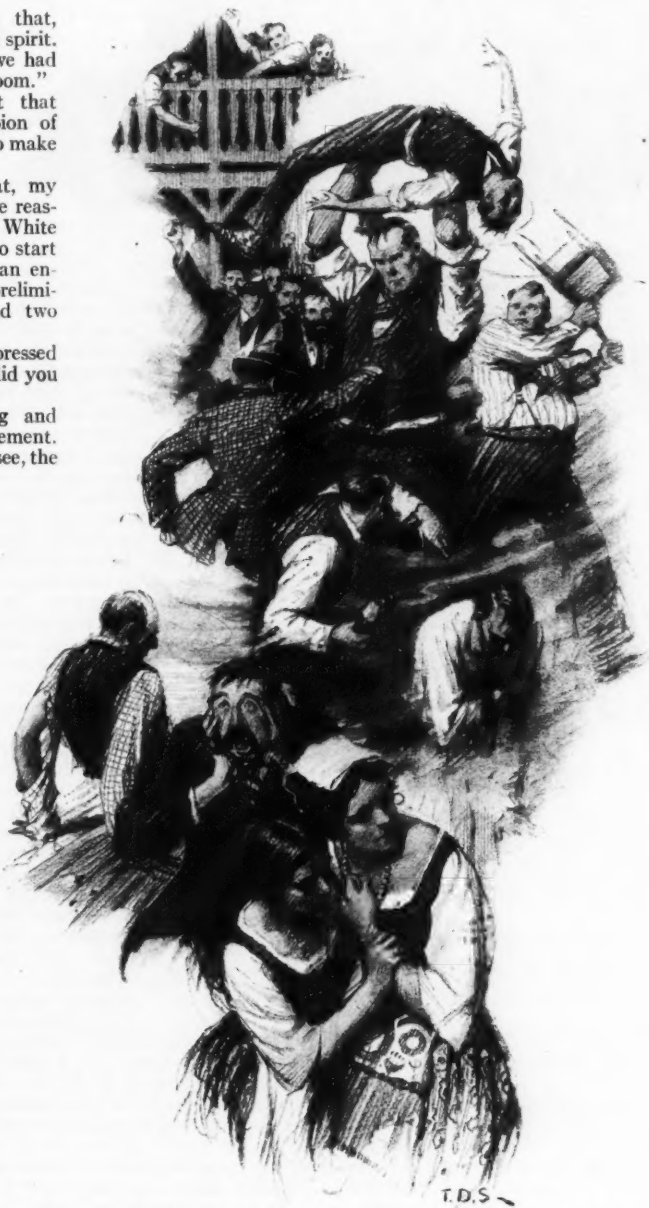
I patted him on the shoulder.

"Go no further," I said. "The thing is settled. Battling Billson is the name."

"Laddie," Ukridge said, in a hushed voice, reaching across the table and grasping my hand, "this is genius. Sheer genius. Order another couple of tawny ports, old man."

I did so, and we drank deep to the Battler's success.

My formal introduction to my godchild took place on our return to Ebury Street, and—great as had been my respect for the man before—it left me with a heightened appreciation of the potentialities for triumph awaiting him in his selected profession. He was awake by this time and moving ponderously about the sitting room, and he looked even more impressive standing than he had appeared when lying down. At our first meeting, moreover, his eyes had been closed in sleep; they were now open, green in color and of a peculiarly metallic glint which caused them, as we shook hands, to seem to be exploring my person for good spots to hit. What was probably intended to be the smile that wins appeared to me a grim and sardonic twist of the lip. Take him for all in all, I had never met a man so calculated to convert the most



In a dance hall in Naples, Billson took on eleven Italians simultaneously.

The Début of Battling Billson

truculent swashbuckler to pacifism at a glance; and when I recalled Ukridge's story of the little unpleasantness at Marseilles and realized that a mere handful of half a dozen able-bodied seamen had had the temerity to engage this fellow in personal conflict, it gave me a thrill of patriotic pride. There must be good stuff in the British Merchant Marine, I felt. Hearts of oak and all that.

Dinner, which followed the introduction, revealed the Battler rather as a capable trencherman than as a sparkling conversationalist. His long reach enabled him to grab salt, potatoes, pepper and other necessities without the necessity of asking for them; and on other topics he seemed to possess no views which he deemed worthy of exploitation. A strong, silent man.

That there was a softer side to his character was, however, made clear to me when, after smoking one of my cigars and talking for a while of this and that, Ukridge went out on one of those mysterious errands of his which were always summoning him at all hours and left my guest and myself alone together. After a bare half-hour's silence, broken only by the soothing gurgle of his pipe, the coming champion cocked an intimidating eye at me and spoke.

"You ever been in love, mister?"

I was thrilled and flattered. Something in my appearance, I told myself, some nebulous something that showed me a man of sentiment and sympathy, had appealed to this man, and he was about to pour out his heart in intimate confession.

I said yes, I had been in love many times. I went on to speak of love as a noble emotion of which no man need be ashamed. I spoke at length and with fervor.

"R!" said Battling Billson.

Then, as if aware that he had been chattering in an undignified manner to a comparative stranger, he withdrew into the silence again and did not emerge till it was time to go to bed, when he said "Good night, mister," and disappeared.

It was disappointing. Significant, perhaps, the conversation had been, but I must confess that I had been rather hoping for something which could have been built up into a human document, entitled "The Soul of the Abyssal Brute," and sold to some editor for that real money which was always so badly needed in the home.

Ukridge and his protégé left next morning for Barnes, and as that riverside resort was somewhat off my beat, I saw no more of the Battler until the fateful night at Wonderland. From time to time Ukridge would drop in at my rooms to purloin cigars and socks, and on these occasions he always spoke with the greatest confidence of his man's prospects. At first, it seemed, there had been a little difficulty owing to the other's rooted

idea that plug tobacco was an indispensable adjunct to training; but towards the end of the first week the arguments of wisdom had prevailed and he had consented to abandon smoking until after his début. By this concession the issue seemed to Ukridge to have been sealed as a certainty, and he was in sunny mood as he borrowed the money from me to pay our fares to the underground station from which the pilgrim alights who wishes to visit that Mecca of East End boxing, Wonderland.

The Battler had preceded us; and, when we arrived, was in the dressing room, stripped to a breath-taking semi-nudity. I had not supposed that it was possible for a man to be larger than was Mr. Billson when arrayed for the street, but in trunks and boxing shoes he looked like his big brother. Muscles resembling the hawsers of an Atlantic liner coiled down his arms and rippled along his massive shoulders. He seemed to dwarf altogether the by no means flimsy athlete who passed out of the room just as we came in.

"That's the bloke," announced Mr. Billson, jerking his red head after this person.

We understood him to imply that the other was his opponent, and the spirit of confidence which had animated us waxed considerably. Where six of the pick of the Merchant Marine had failed, this stripling could scarcely hope to succeed.

"I been talkin' to 'im," Battling Billson said.

I took this unwonted garrulity to be due to a slight nervousness natural at such a moment.

"E's 'ad a lot of trouble, that bloke," said the Battler.

The obvious reply was that he was now going to have a lot more, but before either of us could make it a hoarse voice announced that Squiffy and the Toff had completed their three-round bout and that the stage now waited for our nominee. We hurried to our seats. The necessity of taking a look at our man in his dressing room had deprived us of the pleasure of witnessing the passage of arms between Squiffy and the Toff, but I gathered that it must have been lively and full of entertainment, for the audience seemed in excellent humor. All those who were not too busy eating jellied eels were babbling happily or whistling between their fingers to friends in distant parts of the hall. As Mr. Billson climbed into the ring in all the glory of his red hair and jumping muscles, the babble rose to a roar. It was plain that Wonderland had stamped our Battler with its approval on sight.

The audiences which support Wonderland are not disdainful of science. Neat footwork wins their commendation, and a skillful ducking of the head is greeted with knowing applause. But what they esteem most highly is the punch. And one sight of Battling Billson seemed to tell them that here was the Punch personified. They sent the fighters off to a howl of ecstasy, and settled back in their seats to enjoy the pure pleasure of seeing two of

their fellow men hitting each other very hard and often.

The howl died away . . . I looked at Ukridge with concern. Was this the hero of Marseilles, the man who cleaned out bar-rooms and on whom undertakers fawned? Diffident was the only word to describe our Battler's behavior in that opening round. He pawed lightly at his antagonist. He embraced him like a brother. He shuffled about the ring, innocuous.

"What's the matter with him?" I asked.

"He always starts slow," said Ukridge, but his concern was manifest. He fumbled at the buttons of his mackintosh.



Billson's opponent passed out of the room as we came in. "I been talkin' to 'im. 'E's 'ad a lot of trouble," said the Battler.

The referee was warning Battling Billson. He was speaking to him like a disappointed father. In the cheaper and baser parts of the house enraged citizens were whistling "Comrades."

Everywhere a chill had fallen on the house. That first fine fresh enthusiasm had died away, and the sounding of the gong for the end of the round was greeted with censorious catcalls. As Mr. Billson lurched back to his corner, frank unfriendliness was displayed on all sides.

With the opening of the second round considerably more spirit was introduced into the affair. The same strange torpidity still held our Battler in its grip, but his opponent was another man. During round one he had seemed a little nervous and apprehensive. He had behaved as if he considered it prudent not to stir Mr. Billson. But now this distaste for direct action had left him. There was jauntiness in his demeanor as he moved to the center of the ring; and, having reached it, he uncoiled a long left and smote Mr. Billson forcefully on the nose. Twice he smote, and twice Mr. Billson blinked like one who has had bad news from home. The man who had had a lot of trouble leaned sideways and brought his right fist squarely against the Battler's ear . . .

All was forgotten and forgiven. A moment before the audience had been solidly anti-Billson. Now they were as unanimously pro. For these blows, while they appeared to have affected him not at all physically, seemed to have awakened Mr. Billson's better feelings as if somebody had turned on a tap. They had aroused in Mr. Billson's soul that zest for combat which had been so sadly to seek in round one. For an instant after the receipt of that buffet on the ear the Battler stood motionless on his flat feet, apparently in deep thought. Then, with the air of one who has suddenly remembered an important appointment, he plunged forward. Like an animated windmill he cast himself upon the bloke of troubles. He knocked him here, he bounced him there. He committed mayhem upon his person. He did everything to him that a man can do who is hampered with boxing gloves, until presently the troubled one was leaning heavily against the ropes, his head hanging dazedly, his whole attitude that of a man who would just as soon let the matter drop. It only remained for the Battler to drive home the final punch, and a hundred enthusiasts, rising to their feet, were pointing out to him desirable locations for it.

But once more that strange diffidence had descended upon our representative. While every other man in the building seemed to know the correct procedure and was sketching it out in nervous English, Mr. Billson appeared the victim of doubt. He looked uncertainly at his opponent and inquiringly at the referee.

The referee, obviously a man of blunted sensibilities, was unresponsive. "Do It Now" was plainly his slogan. He was a business man, and he wanted his patrons to get good value for their money. He was urging Mr. Billson to make a thorough job of it. And finally Mr. Billson approached his man and drew back his right arm. Having done this, he looked over his shoulder once more at the referee.

It was a fatal blunder. The man who had had a lot of trouble may have been in poor shape, but like most of his profession he retained despite his recent misadventures a reserve store of energy. Even as Mr. Billson turned his head, he reached down to the floor with his gloved right hand, then, with a final effort, brought it up in a majestic sweep against the angle of the other's jaw. And then, as the fickle audience with swift change of sympathy cheered him on, he buried his left in Mr. Billson's stomach on the exact spot where the well dressed man wears the third button of his waistcoat.

Of all human experiences, that of being smitten in this precise locality is the least agreeable. Battling Billson dropped like a stricken flower, settled slowly down and spread himself out. He lay peacefully on his back with outstretched arms like a man floating in smooth water. His day's work was done.

A wailing cry rose above the din of excited patrons of sport endeavoring to explain to their neighbors how it had all happened. It was the voice of Ukridge mourning over his dead.

At half-past eleven that night, as I was preparing for bed, a drooping figure entered my room. I mixed a silent, sympathetic Scotch and soda, and for a while no word was spoken.

"How is the poor fellow?" I asked at length.



"This bloke says 'Put 'em up!' Tod says 'Put wot up?' 'E says 'Yer 'ands.' An' then they're fightin' all over the shop."

"He's all right," said Ukridge listlessly. "I left him eating fish and chips at a coffee stall."

"Bad luck, his getting pipped on the post like that."

"Bad luck!" boomed Ukridge, throwing off his lethargy with a vigor that spoke of mental anguish. "What do you mean, bad luck? It was just confounded bone-headedness. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard. I invest vast sums in this man, I support him in luxury for two weeks, asking nothing of him in return except to sail in and knock somebody's head off, which he could have done in two minutes if he had liked, and he lets me down purely and simply because the other fellow told him that he had been up all night looking after his wife, who had burned her hand at the jam factory. Infernal sentimentalism!"

"Does him credit," I argued.

"Bah!"

"Kind hearts," I urged, "are more than coronets."

"Who the deuce wants a pugilist to have a kind heart? What's the use of this man Billson being able to knock out an elephant if he's afflicted with this maudlin mushiness? Who ever heard of a mushy pugilist? It's the wrong spirit. It doesn't make for success."

"It's a handicap, of course," I admitted.

"What guarantee have I," demanded Ukridge, "that if I go to enormous trouble and expense getting him another match, he won't turn aside and brush away a silent tear in the first round because he's heard that the blighter's wife has got an ingrowing toenail?"

"You could match him only against bachelors."

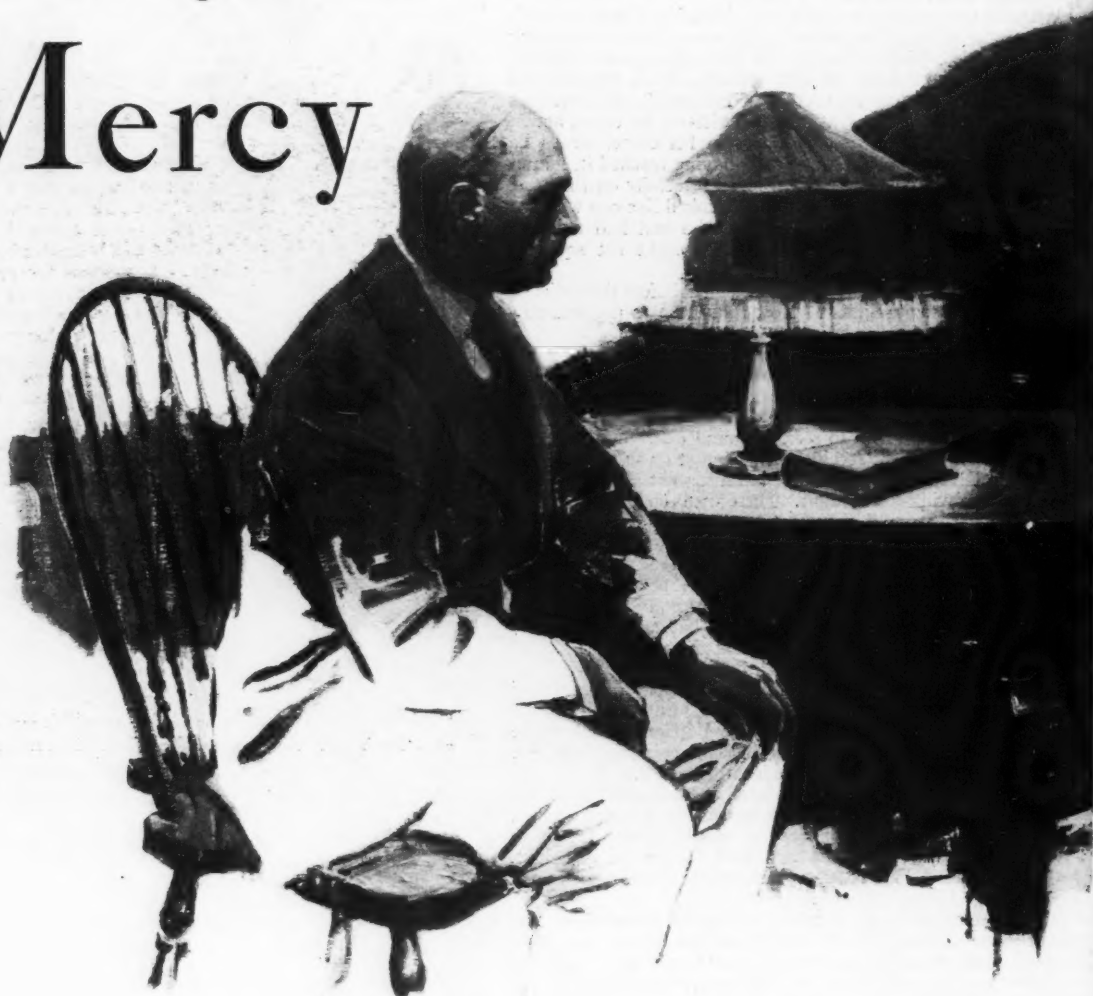
"Yes, and the first bachelor he met would draw him into a corner and tell him his aunt was down with whooping cough, and the chump would heave a sigh and stick his chin out to be walloped. A fellow's got no business to have red hair if he isn't going to live up to it. And yet," said Ukridge wistfully, "I've seen that man—it was in a dance hall at Naples—I've seen him take on at least eleven Italians simultaneously. But then one of them had stuck a knife about three (Continued on page 151)"

The Second Part of

PETER CLARK MACFARLANE'S

*True Story of a Man's Conscience, a
Woman's Love, and a City's Heart*

Mercy



THIS is a true story. It is the story of a once prominent minister, whom the author names Robert N. Wills. In his youth, Wills abandoned his wife and children to run away with a beautiful young woman in his choir. Under the assumed name of Walton, he found work on a newspaper. One night he spoke in a prayer meeting; spoke so movingly that the congregation insisted on his taking the pastorate of their obscure little church. Despite his past wrong-doing, something deep in Walton made it impossible for him to resist the call.

From then on, his life was a strange one. Pursued by fear of discovery, he and the woman he loved fled from one church to another, each larger than the last. His influence grew. He seemed to command a curious love and admiration; he understood men. Yet there was always a shadow in his eyes. At last, after many years, two women from his first congregation found him in his large city church. He confessed to them; and they were so moved by his story that they agreed to keep his secret. But a man, who also knew it, in a fit of anger told one of Walton's church leaders. Horrified, he wrote a letter threatening exposure unless Walton resigned at once.

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THIS letter of Hollis Gant was handed to the Reverend Robert N. Walton at the midweek prayer meeting. Some intuition must have told the man it threatened to denounce what the envelope contained, for he thrust it deep into his pocket; and only at home, in the secure privacy of his study, with the faithful partner of his ghastly secret by his side, did he read the letter—read it and put it from him, lips twisting, but with a new kind of weakening in the glance he bent upon the brown-eyed woman. Years—years, and that one fatuous yielding up to hope—must have softened his endurance; for, hitherto, at the first hint of exposure, it had been enough for him to fly. Tonight he felt that he had not only to fly, but that he must tell somebody—tell!

The man he turned to was Elder George Fawcett, soft-spoken, kindly, of about his own age, diligent in business, diligent for the church, diligent also in his friendships. He, having just parted from his pastor in apparently normal spirits at prayer meeting, was astounded to hear the pastor's stricken voice on the telephone. Backing his roadster out of the garage, he reached the parsonage in a few minutes and the sweep of his lamps picked up the figure of the minister already waiting on the curb.

"What's wrong, Bob?" he inquired anxiously, with a sympathetic lowering of his voice.



Illustrations by
Herbert M. Stoops

"Mrs. Walton," Mose demanded abruptly, "have you got any sand in your craw? Are you a fighter or a runner?"

"Let's drive, George!" proposed Walton hoarsely. "I've—I've got to tell you something."

It was a four hour ride they took, northward out of the city and into the night; and at length the minister had labored out a story—a story of what he was!

Fawcett had listened with slowly congealing horror and instinctive shrinking from the man by his side. This man! This idol of his church—not merely weak but sinful, and through a lifetime deliberately a hypocrite in the most sacred relations of life! Why, it was unbelievable—yet related with an agony which enforced belief. But after a time the elder had bucked himself up sufficiently to face the fact.

"There—there must have been mitigating circumstances," he urged.

"No, no! No alibi! I wish there was," groaned Walton. "No, it was just the flesh! I saw this young woman and I wanted her. Oh, God, how I wanted her—more than faith, more than honor, more than anything! I knew it was wrong, but I didn't care, I wanted her so much. I just—took her! She has been everything to me ever since . . . But afterward I did care," he panted. "I did care. But then it was too late; I couldn't undo it. There was nothing to do but just—go on. No, there isn't any alibi. Not even God could find one!"

The elder, loving his friend, trying to find excuses for him, found it a mitigating circumstance now that no mitigating circumstance was pleaded; then reproached him gently: "Of course, Bob, this going right on in the ministry is what puts the worst angle on it."

But at this point the convulsed sinner rallied and had something to say for himself.

"I didn't want to, George; you can be sure I didn't want to," he urged in his defense. "I went into another business; and I was getting along all right. But somehow I couldn't keep away from the church, and when I went I couldn't keep from speaking, and—well, can't you see, George—that part of it?" And Fawcett, at the wheel, felt the hands of Walton tugging at him to understand that much of it. "Unclean! Unclean!" I kept crying to myself, but they would have me in the pulpit. Finally, Brownie and I said to each other: 'Well, if the Lord can use us this way, why not let Him?' So we did. Wasn't that right, George; wasn't it, do you think?"

And Fawcett found the plea in his friend's voice almost irresistible; found all this later life of his suddenly comprehensible.

"And think of it, George," besought Walton; "think what it's been to be dogged by fear for twenty-five years—afraid to go



Mrs. Walton admitted Mose, cried a little and then pointed to the study where Robert waited.

out on the street, afraid to go to the church, afraid to look out over the congregation for fear of seeing a familiar face; afraid to answer a knock at the door or a ring on the phone, afraid to open a telegram or a letter, afraid to pick up a newspaper—afraid to be found out, George, and see a wreck made of the work that, under God, I've been permitted to do. It was ghastly, brother; ghastly!"

The hoarse voice was swallowed up in a shudder and at last the man broke down and wept inconsolably.

"And now it's come!" he sobbed. "It's come! There's nothing to think of but the good name of the church. We'll go, Brownie and I and the boys; we'll go." The man gulped another sob as he mentioned his boys. "Oh, we'll go quick! We must. I want you, Brother Fawcett, to lay my resignation before the elders tomorrow night. You'll have to call a meeting. Tell them my reasons are imperative. Tell them if they love me, if they've ever cared a thing for what I've done, to accept the resignation without a question. I'll be gone before Sunday."

It was now two o'clock in the morning and Fawcett was by this time beginning to recover himself somewhat. The sin seemed less enormous now in the light of those twenty-five good years. His heart went out to the sinner less reservedly. He spared an arm from the wheel to put it round him. He loved him again—as much as ever—more tenderly than before. But—*he* was a churchman. The church must be protected at all costs. He saw this just as clearly as Walton did, and he believed it just as fervently. Therefore on the succeeding night, which was Thursday, he called the elders together.

Without giving them any reason except the minister's imploring demand, Fawcett presented the resignation of Robert N. Walton to their astounded eyes; and such was the power of his

appeal, such was the measure of their faith in him, such was their love for their pastor that they bowed to his communicated wish. They became responsible to the congregation for the acceptance of its pastor's resignation—a quite irregular procedure. Having done which, they sat or stood or stared, stunned and wondering.

Yet their confidence in Walton was still unimpaired. George Fawcett, seeing this, knowing it would comfort the anxious

heart of the man, was careful to tell him of it when he made him acquainted that same night with the result of his efforts with the elders. The minister thanked him gratefully but did not invite him to remain. George, heavy in spirit, went out as from a house of mourning and Walton dropped in his Morris chair, in that study which had become his Gethsemane; the woman was crouched upon a hassock by his side, holding tight to his hand. At length he heaved a deep-drawn sigh, freighted with a soul's long weariness.

"This is the last church, mama," he mourned. "I—I can't ever go through it again."

"No," agreed the little woman sadly, who had so long been harried with him from field to field. "No—you mustn't ever." She stroked his hand, gazing up into his unseeing face, noting how broken he looked this time—so much more broken than ever before. It was the long strain, she told herself; these fruitful fifties of his were to be also his failing fifties.

Just then came a ring upon the telephone. The hour was nearly midnight. That ring meant a sick call—a deathbed call, perhaps; and Robert N. Walton never refused himself to the sick; yet the days of his pastoring were at an end and he could not bring himself to answer. But the jangling persisted.

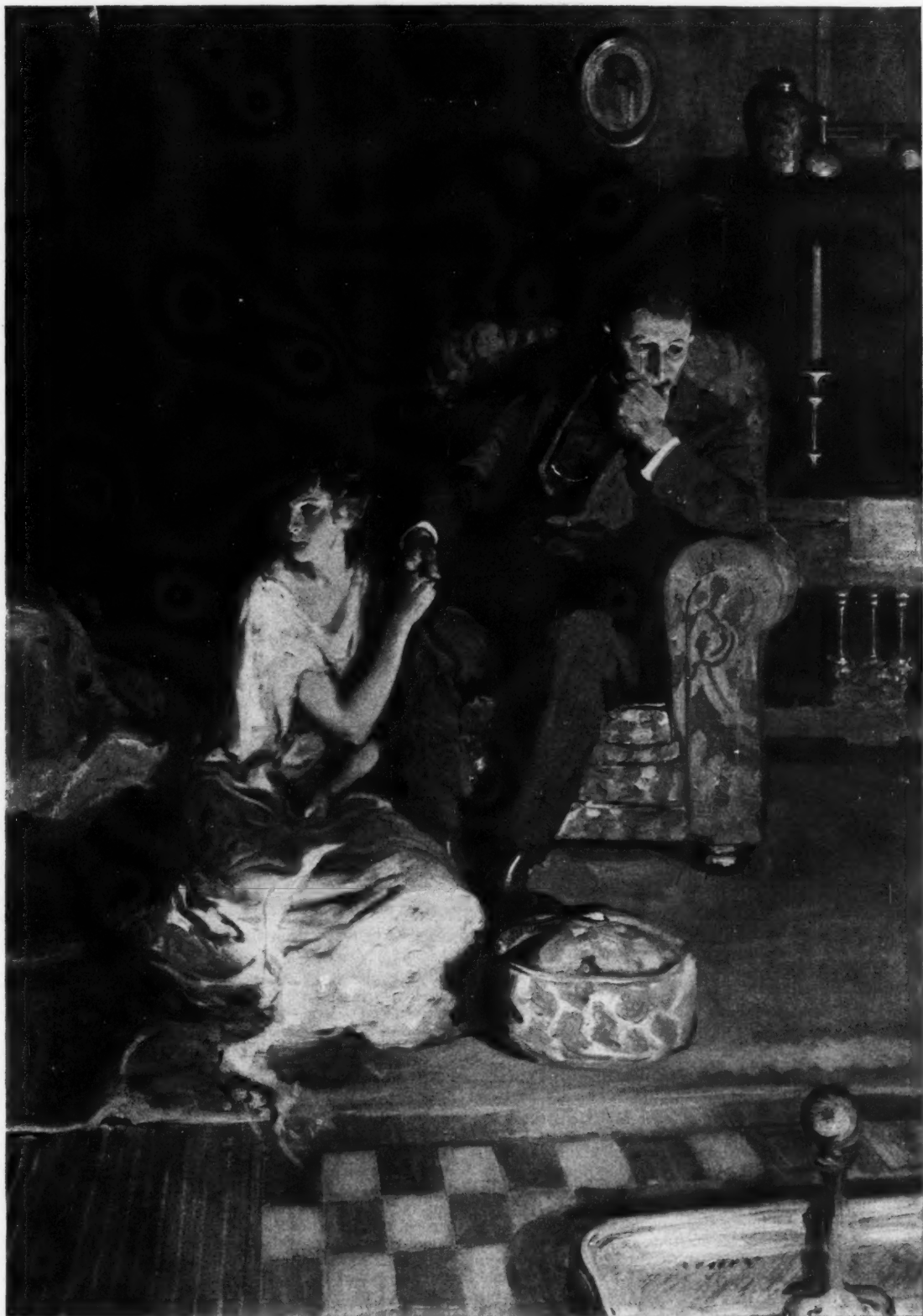
Now it should be explained that the minister had another personal friendship in this flourishing city of E—that was as close, as intimate in all respects as that with Elder George Fawcett; yet in its essence different, for Moses Mullen was an essentially different man. Mose Mullen he called himself; and so did most other people. Moses was not a member of the official board of Walton's church, although that dignity had been offered him. For Mose was *sui generis*—and inclined to go it alone. Perhaps his reputed three or four millions made him dictatorial. Anyhow, he had a resistless way with him, once he got started, and a marvelous command of biting and picturesque language once he set out to command language at all.

Besides, Mose was known to have had a past—a hell-roaring past if rumor might be believed—and sometimes it can. He had roamed the world around. He had roped cows and punched steers; he had navvied in many ports; he had played a year or two in professional baseball and sat in at more poker games than there are verses in the Bible.

But eventually he had graduated himself into the business game, and being by temperament a gambler, found his way into the Chicago wheat pit, there to attract the attention of Frank Norris at the very moment when he was gathering material for his second great epic of the wheat. Struck at once with the picturesque force and charm of Mose—*young* Mose then—the California author transplanted him in all but name to the pages of his immortal story, and there you may find him in the broker sent to execute that series of startling and eventually disastrous orders with which the dénouement of the tale is brought about.

But Mose wasn't on 'change now. He was chastened a great deal, cured from the eccentricities and errata of youth; but he had still the instinctive independencies of the Southern-born. His grandfather had been a great breeder of race horses; his father had been selected by General Lee to rule with stern hand over Quantrell's famous undisciplined band; and Mose was himself now a sort of guerilla—even about things in the church. True, he loved the church—this church which had received him a penitent into its arms when he was a liability even to himself, and carried him along till now he was an asset to church and community. But—he was a bushwhacker Christian—fighting the Devil according to tactics of his own devising. Yet he had always been devout. Even in his gambling days, many was the time he had fervently prayed for another ace in the draw, and religiously had he sent his winnings home to his God-fearing parents, scrupling only to tell them that they were winnings and not earnings.

Yes—Mose had seen the seamy side of life and lived some of it; the seams were still visible upon his face. Serene in the consciousness of his fundamental rectitude, he lifted himself above



"This is the last church, mama," he mourned "I—I can't ever go through it again."

resenting the brethren who couldn't understand him. He understood them and that was enough. His heart was full of charity; but this did not blur his almost uncanny powers of discernment.

The first time he met Robert N. Walton, he put him on probation as it were; as if he recognized in him an unusual man, but—with something doubtful about him.

"I'm going to watch you for a year," he said bluntly.

"Fair enough," agreed Walton, accepting the challenge. "I've heard enough to know that you'll bear watching yourself."

Both men laughed.

"So good so far!" announced Mose at the end of that twelve months. "I'm going to watch you another year."



"It isn't often a church gets a chance to do a great big Christian thing," Mose told

At the end of that second year, he said, "Walton, I want you to join my lodge." That was Mose Mullen's supreme compliment to any man; and the joining of that Masonic lodge became later almost as significant as this striking hands between two men who had seen far down into the open craters of human passion.

Now it had happened that Mose was away on a fishing trip on the day when Robert Walton received that disturbing letter from the zealot of the Bible class; therefore still away when the minister got home at two o'clock in the morning from the long ride with the elder in which his resignation had been agreed upon; and nobody could have been gladder of this than Walton himself, for it would have been bitter hard, this parting from the rough old walrus of a Mullen, who loved him with a love that went clear down into the taproots of his being. Accordingly the minister had put his farewell into a short, poignant note, breathing affection and communicating the startling fact that he had resigned and would be gone before his friend returned to the city.

But fate—or was it Providence?—brought Mose Mullen home from his fishing four days earlier than he had expected; and though it was late at night, some "hunch" that would not be denied drove him immediately to his office. There he found an envelope marked "Private and Strictly Confidential." He tore it open, read it with a picturesque exclamation, literary rather than profane, and reached for the telephone.

It was Mullen's ring that Walton had been sitting for some seconds afraid to answer; but at last he got up courage to take the receiver from the hook.

"That you, Bob?" came over the phone.

"Yes," answered Walton, recognizing the voice at once.

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"Well, what in blazes do you mean?" blustered Mose, in his biggest roaring voice.

"Just that—that—" faltered Walton, heart melted by this boisterous friendliness in which surprise, reproach and grief were mingled in equal parts. "Just that—" But his voice broke. He could not talk.

"Wait up, Bob! I'm coming there fast!" bellowed Mose, sensing a tragic situation; and as quick as twelve cylinders could bring him, he was there.

The woman admitted him, cried upon his arm a little while his big hand patted her brown head, then pointed silently to the study door where Robert waited, covered with shame, to face one of the finest, truest friends a man ever had. And he did face him and he told his story again, as frankly, as mercilessly to himself, only more coherently perhaps, than he had told it to Fawcett; but Mose Mullen was far less shocked than the elder had been. He was hurt; he was astounded, and a good deal indignant; he looked Robert N. Walton through with such a glance as had never shaken him before. But he *understood* more easily than Fawcett; for he knew better the wild horses that are in man.

He could understand how Robert N. Walton, a very intense sort of fellow in all that he did, had been for some days in his life just a weak, flabby sinner; and he knew out of his wide experience that there is no man who has not his weak and flabby moments and that lucky are they who do not in them commit some such sin as manacles them for life. Lucky, that's all, lucky; God, he believed, caring no more for them who have been saved from sin by cowardice or chance than for those who by that same chance are snared.



them. "You've got it now. God has forgiven this man. Can't this church forgive him?"

Mose was much less horrified by Walton's confession than Walton was horrified by himself. Fawcett and the minister, when they looked at this blighted career, felt concern first for the church. Mose felt concern first for his friend. Of course there was this difference between Fawcett and Mullen: the elder had grown up in the church, got his religion from the church, and he thought of it as the nourishing mother of the Christian spirit; while Mose had got his religion at a human mother's knee. Christianity wasn't a thing of institutions with him; it was just spirit, a spirit of forgiveness, of saving, of helping. He looked across at the pitifully dejected figure of Robert N. Walton and he thought: "If Christianity is any good it ought to save this man." And for Mose to think a thing was to begin at once to act it.

"Mrs. Walton!" he called out in that large voice of his. "Come in here!"

She came—quickly, revealing that she had been listening at the door, quite as he divined.

"Mrs. Walton, have you got any sand in your craw? Are you a fighter or a runner?" Mose demanded abruptly.

The brown-eyed woman stood, halted by the seeming import of those words, scanning the broad face of the man, broad and hard, yet somehow mellow; for though Mullen's forms of speech were at times uncouth, there was in him a tenderness like the tenderness of a woman.

"You've been running away from this for years! Are you willing to stay here and make a fight?" he proposed bluntly.

Robert N. Walton himself was staring. Was the man meaning—meaning that they should face it down? Face open denunciation? He was actually amazed that his wife weighed her

answer to Mullen's question; but she did weigh it; for she had been harried until the worm in her was about to turn. She was rebellious that this great work which God had wrought through her husband should be broken off, wrecked or even impaired because of a sin they two had committed in the hot blood of a youth that was now pitifully departed from both of them. She fixed her wide, wistful eyes upon this rugged friend with a sudden crystallization of her rebellion into faith.

"Yes," she answered hoarsely. "Yes, Mr. Mullen; I am."

"Hear that, Bob!" commanded Mose triumphantly, his voice ringing out, for he couldn't help ringing out when he was in deadly earnest. "Hear the little woman! She's going to stand by you and fight. So am I. God A'mighty hates a coward, Bob. He sure does hate a runner."

But protest was in Walton's face: horror was rising into it. "But the church must not be brought into—"

"Bob!" Mullen broke in solemnly, "it's very seldom a church gets a chance to practice—really *practice* the Christian religion. This church is about to get it. The elders are going to squelch that resignation."

"No, no!" groaned Walton. "I've gone through this agony for the last time. No; I must go away."

"You'll *not* go away!" thundered Mose. "But you're right, Bob, you've gone through this for the last time; because now we're going to tell those elders the truth."

"The truth?" inquired Walton, in a ghastly whisper. "The truth?"

"You must tell the elders tomorrow night!" declared Mose, inexorable.

(Continued on page 144)

Stories That Have Made Me LAUGH



IN AMERICA and England it is customary for comic papers to run at intervals paragraphs headed "English as She Is Spoke," being a form of humor derived from the attempt of some poor foreigner during a moment of excitement to speak the English language. Here in Mexico City some of the heartiest laughs that taxi drivers and waiters have enjoyed in years are elicited by the attempts of a miserable American writer to make his wants known in the Spanish language.

In retaliation therefor, let me say that there was a Spaniard in London who was heard to say to a cabman:

"If I did know ze English for ze box, I would blow your nose, by damn, I am."

There was also a waiter in an English restaurant professing to be Swiss who repaired to the kitchen with an order for a plate of chicken and tongue. He came back to the customer and shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"Tongue iss no more," he announced. "Schicken never vas."

Lastly, another waiter in an English hotel was accustomed to address the guests at breakfast somewhat in the following fashion:

"How you like your eggs boiled? Tight or loose?"

DURING the recent business depression two cloak and suit merchants met on the street.

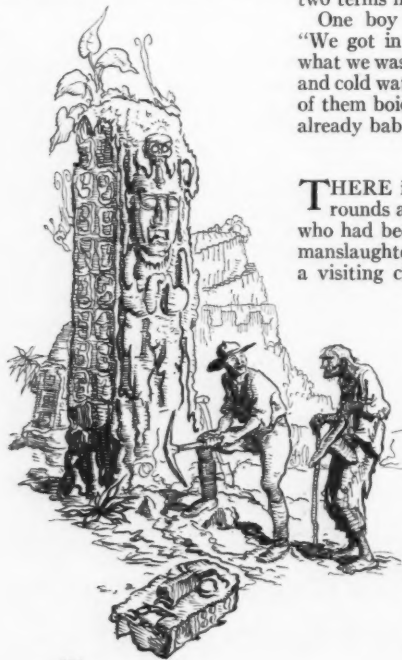
"Hello, Ben," one said to the other. "How's business you darned liar."

A DOCTOR told me this one. He said he found it in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The children of an East Side school were being instructed in the difference between a cynic and a stoic. Before proceeding with the lesson, the teacher asked her class of little boys what they thought the two terms meant.

One boy called Louis said: "We got in our rooms a cynic what we wash dishes in it by hot and cold water, but a stoic is one of them boids which they bring already babies."

THERE is a story going the rounds about a colored man who had been put in prison for manslaughter. When asked by a visiting clergyman if he had been sentenced for life, he replied: "No, suh, not for life. Jes' from now on."

This story may or may not be derived from a volume which I ran across in a book store on the Avenida Francisco I. Madero, in Mexico City, where this is being written. It was called "Mexican Life and



Character" or some such title and tells about a peon in Coyoacan who was present at the excavation of some Toltec or Aztec remains. He was an extremely old man, and some of the other peons present thought that the relics must have been buried there within his recollection.

"They were not buried in my time," he said.

"And you have lived here all your life?" the excavator asked.

"No, *caballero*, not all my life," the old peon replied. "Only up to now."

NO DOUBT you have seen pictures of mountain climbers scaling the Alps with alpenstocks in their hands. Sometimes a party of six or seven will be roped together so that if one of them slips the others will dig in with their alpenstocks, and altogether the whole thing is done in an out-of-date fashion—not at all in the manner of California mountain climbing.



In California, people climb mountains in parties of six or seven roped together in flivvers or sometimes not roped together but just tucked in so snugly that they cannot possibly fall out. In fact they can't even breathe, except in turns. My friend Doctor A. R. Goodman of Mexico City says that during a recent stay in California he heard of at least three thousand hardy California mountain climbers ascending the summit of Mount Wilson in this fashion on one Sunday alone.

There was one still harder mountain climber who made his ascent on that particular Sunday in a limousine. He did it in the afternoon and met all the other climbers flushed with success on their way down from the summit. Now the Mount Wilson toll road is just wide enough for one car when driven by a courageous driver, and not wide enough for me by about six feet or on a bet

of a million dollars. At intervals of a quarter of a mile or so there are turn-outs, and the rule of the road is that if two cars meet the ascending car must back down to the nearest turn-out.

The limousine mountain climber had backed down to the nearest turn-out ten times for ten flivvers and after completing his tenth back-down he had proceeded to within a hundred feet of the next turn-out when he rounded a curve in the road and encountered his eleventh flivver. They stopped radiator to radiator, and the limousine mountain climber alighted from his car.

"Stranger," he said to the driver of the flivver, "how much will you take for that car of yours?"

"Why, this is a new flivver!" the stranger said.

"I don't give a whoop," the mountain climber retorted. "How much do you want for it?"

"I'll take five hundred dollars," the flivver owner said, "and not a cent less."

"Well," the limousine man said, pulling a bill fold from his

By MONTAGUE GLASS

Illustrations by Gordon Ross

breast pocket and counting out five one hundred dollar bills, "if there's any keepsakes in that car you don't want to have go down the side of this here mountain, I'll give you sixty seconds to take them out."

HERE is another story which has recently been revived and has also been pinned on after-dinner speakers and any other Reformer who works for his audience's kind applause. It was told first about Arthur Lloyd and one Vance, both of them well known music hall artists.

"Shocking thing about poor old Vance!" Arthur Lloyd said one day back in 1880. "They hissed him frightfully last night. I went on immediately afterwards and quieted them down with a couple of songs. But when I finished, blest if they didn't start in to hiss old Vance all over again."

A BANKER in a Southern city writes me that he holds a mortgage on a small farm in a remote part of his state. The interest had been in arrears for nearly three years, and the other day he was much gratified to receive a visit from the owner of the farm, who handed him not only the entire interest to date but the principal as well.

"Things must be looking up for you," the banker said. "Tolerable," the farmer replied.

"How is it that you were able to raise all this money?" the banker inquired.

"Well, it's like this," the farmer said. "For several years I planted my land to cotton and it didn't make out so good, but this last year I planted the whole durned place to corn."

"And did you do well?" the banker asked.

"Better than I expected," the farmer answered. "I got about six gallons to the acre."

THERE is an old story about a colored man on trial for burglary who was asked if he would like to have counsel assigned to him for his defense. On inquiring as to what all that miscellaneous language meant, he was told that the court proposed to assign him a lawyer to get him off.

"And whaffo' is all dem gen'men ovah dar?" he asked, pointing to some talesmen sitting in the enclosure for counsel.

"They're jurymen," he was told.

"An' kin dey git me off?" he asked.

"Well, I suppose they can," he was told by the clerk.

"Den Ah reckon Ah'll take a juryman," he replied. And this is only preliminary to the story of another colored man. He was assigned as his joint counsel two young lawyers who had recently gone into partnership in a Southern town. The colored defendant consulted with these inexperienced attorneys for some time, and every minute or so the word *alibi* could be heard by the judge.

At last the defendant rose and addressed the court.

"Jedge, Yo' Honah!" he said. "Ef it's all de same to you all, Ah'd sho like to trade one of dese hyuh lawyers fo' a witness."

THE San Antonio Express recently contained a news item which said that Koppel Light, a fish peddler, was sentenced to jail for failing to pay two dollars a week towards the support of his 106 year old father, Reuben Light.

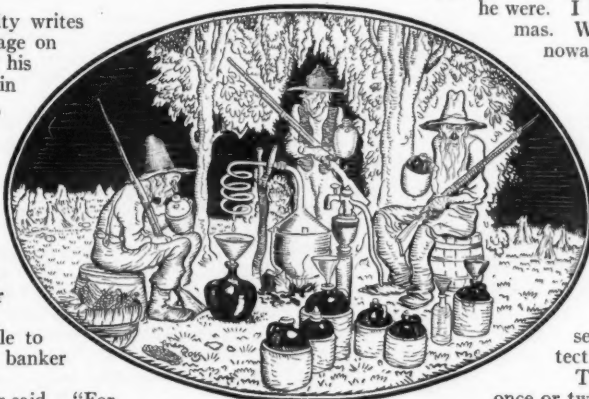
"Koppel's ingratitude," his sister told the court, "has broken his father's heart. He will not live long."



Koppel may or may not have been reading Professor Sumner's "Folkways," which cites examples of stone hammers hanging behind church doors in mediæval Scandinavia to be used for the humane purpose of keeping grandpa out of the Bergen Home for Aged and Infirm Scandinavians.

It is doubtful whether Koppel will mourn the untimely end of his poor father as did the old countryman cited by the London Morning Post.

"Ah!" he said sadly, somewhat muddled by conventional grief and the beer he was sipping. "I just come from burying my poor old feyther; he were ninety-five, he were. I be only seventy-four last Christmas. We don't live to them old ages nowadays."



A NEW YORK theatrical manager was contemplating the purchase of a Chicago theater and took his consulting architect with him to look over the auditorium. They were standing in the rear of the orchestra seats during a performance when the architect nudged the manager.

"The acoustics of this place seem very bad, Jake," the architect said.

The manager sniffed vigorously once or twice. "Maybe I've got a cold or something," he said, "but I don't notice it."

PUBLIC education in the Philippine Islands has now reached a stage of organization where the greatest efficiency prevails—at least in the matter of organization, if not in education. There are teachers to teach the children, supervising teachers to teach the teachers, and if the following incident is true, there must be supervising supervisors, who have a much more difficult time supervising the supervising teachers than either the supervising teachers have in teaching the teachers or the teachers themselves have in teaching the pupils.

This sounds a bit involved but the following letter will explain everything. It was sent by a lady teacher in one of the rural schools to the Director of Education, Manila, and while it is not offered as a form to be followed by any lady teacher of these United States who may at some time find herself in similar circumstances, it is recommended as vividly yet simply conveying what it sets out to convey:

DEAR SIR:

I have the honor to resignate as my works are many and my salary are few. Besides which my supervising teacher makes many lovings to me to which I only reply, "Oh, not, Oh, not."

Very respectfully,
Josefina Villareal



His Past

(Continued from page 71)

a semi-organization called "Men whom Rose Bellamy won't marry" did not deter Henry Staggard. The more difficult the battle the greater the victory.

She was ice, but he knew the fire that burned beneath the ice. Carefully, he studied her. He analyzed the men who, if gossip could be trusted at all, had wooed and failed to win her. Every last one of them had inherited his wealth and his position. Could it be that she had entered her twenty-eighth year, still a belle, but unwed because she asked of her future husband something of that iron strain that these men whom she met in her everyday life might seem to lack?

Staggard had succeeded because he had traded upon the weaknesses of human nature. Knowledge of weakness gives one knowledge of strength. He believed that he had learned the method whereby Rose Bellamy could be won.

She was secretary, he learned, of a society whose purpose was the Americanization of the foreigner. He sent her a check for twenty thousand dollars, to further the society's aims. He knew, he wrote, what the right sort of work could do for the immigrant. He himself had been turned adrift at the tender age of nine; he had fought for education, fought for success . . .

He was invited to address the society. He was a good looking chap, and his forty years sat lightly upon his broad shoulders. He had the trick of looking one directly in the eye, of gripping one's hand firmly, of affecting an open generosity.

At the society's meeting he was as frank, apparently, as a child. He'd had a hard time; he'd struggled, slaved! He'd won out. No, he'd be honest—he hadn't won out. The things that belonged to men who had been born in gentle homes could never be his. He knew it; he wouldn't be weak enough to delude himself with the idea that he could measure up with born gentlemen. But he'd made, he could safely say, a good job with poor materials. And what he'd done any foreigner, *anybody*, could do, provided he had ambition and were willing to work. And after all, he asked ingenuously, why should a man aspire to heights beyond him?

"But," said Rose Bellamy to him later, "I think it's ridiculous the way you disparage yourself. Because you were not the son of wealthy parents—"

"That is kind of you," he told her. "But the thing that I would want must be denied to me."

She wanted to know what he wanted. She was his champion without realizing it. And so from an invitation to tea he progressed to an invitation to dinner. She came to understand what it was that he wanted—herself.

She was not in love with him. But there was a glamour about his achievements. His modesty, his unwillingness to push himself—why, these were the attributes of gentility, of a gentleman, the thing which he thought that he was not.

A woman of Staggard's own stamp would have known him for what he was, an unscrupulous adventurer. Confidence men would have read him at sight. But a woman like Rose Bellamy never had a

chance with him. She believed him. And so today he knew that, whether or not she really loved, it would not be difficult to persuade her, that she did. And so he beamed. There was no warmth in the beam; it was cold as the winter sun.

Ah, well, this afternoon he'd propose, be accepted—he was sure of that; Rose Bellamy was intrigued with the things that she might make of this self-made—thus far—man from the West.

His secretary interrupted his pleasant dreams. "Mr. Blaney to see you."

"Show him in," said Staggard curtly.

Blaney entered. A stoop-shouldered man, with furtive eyes that watered easily behind thick glasses, his face wore a defiant expression now. He waited until the secretary had vanished behind the softly closed door. Then he spoke.

"If this is a trick, Staggard—"

Staggard waved him to a seat. "Why should I trick you?" he asked.

"Once a thief, always a thief," quoted his visitor.

Staggard did not become angry. No red showed in his cheeks. His easy acceptance of the insult proved his dishonesty. "Have a cigar?" he invited.

The watery eyed man shook his head. "I want the money," he said harshly.

Staggard opened a drawer in his desk. He drew out an envelope. He tossed it to his visitor. "Count it," he advised.

Blaney fingered the envelope a moment. He glanced over his shoulder as though he were afraid. Then his air of defiance came back to him. He opened the envelope, withdrawing from it packages of currency, each package neatly bound in tape upon which was printed the amount within.

"Fifty thousand," he said at length.

"Exactly what I agreed. Now—give me what I want," demanded Staggard.

Slowly the other unbuttoned his coat. From an inner pocket he produced an envelope. He handed it to Staggard.

For a moment the room turned upside down for Staggard. This was his past. Ah, how many persons were ever privileged to hold their pasts in their hands, to do with as they willed, to destroy, wipe out, obliterate? And he could do that. He looked through the papers inside. There was the evidence of his crime of years ago; there was his own confession . . . How cheaply, all things considered, he had managed to purchase them from the lawyer who held them. Now he could do as he willed. Blaney had surrendered the things that prevented Staggard from entering into his own. He could enter into it now.

The shabby lawyer arose. He fumbled for words. He found "Much obliged."

Staggard smiled. "Same to you, Blaney. Hope this money will help you to a better place."

He, the crook, suddenly patronized the lawyer who alone had held evidence of his crookedness. Blaney flushed. It had taken months of negotiation before he had surrendered his decency, had taken hush money. Now he realized that he was as low as Staggard. He shuffled from the room.

"Every last one of them—they have their price," grinned Staggard. He need

fear no exposure; he could go to Rose Bellamy . . . Ah! He reached for the telephone.

"Miss Bellamy?" he asked a moment later. "This is Henry—Staggard." He paused after uttering his first name; then courage failed him. To go slow, until the psychological moment, and then to sweep her off her feet; that was the way. So he gave his full name.

"Good afternoon," she said.

"It will be a good afternoon if you are to be at home," he told her.

She laughed. Another man would have thrilled at the low delicious tones. But not Staggard. Although by every right that the possession of beauty, breeding and charm conveys, she was entitled to give any man a thrill, she could not do that to Staggard. No one could. He was that sort. He'd marry her and get along with her, but—he was of the commonest, meanest clay; his kind could not appreciate a Rose Bellamy.

"That's a pretty speech. I couldn't very well refuse now. At tea?"

"If I may," he said.

And so it was agreed. Once again he dreamed. He saw himself received in all those mansions whose occupants ignored him now. Political place, too, he would dare accept now . . . He roused himself, rang for his secretary, gave some business orders and left the office.

His car was awaiting him. The quiet, polite chauffeur did his share in contributing toward the sense of well-being that possessed Staggard. How pleasant it was to roll luxuriously uptown while millions hung on to subway straps . . . On the Avenue, slightly above Forty-second Street, he stopped. He entered a florist's shop and selected long-stemmed roses, two dozen of them. They would arrive, the florist assured him, at Miss Bellamy's address within twenty minutes. That suited Staggard; his entrance would follow just soon enough upon the flowers.

It was a brisk day of early spring, Octoberish in the air's tang. His Japanese servant had lighted a fire in the living room, huge for an apartment in New York. Staggard warmed his hands before the open blaze. Then he withdrew from his overcoat pocket the fateful documents that he had this day purchased.

When first he had opened negotiations with Blaney looking to the recovery of the papers, he had thought, of course, that once they were in his hand he would destroy them instantly. But burning paper in his office would look queer to his staff. "Looking queer" was something that, with his desire for respectability, nowadays mattered a lot to Staggard. So he had decided to burn them at home. But now, looking at them, he could not bear to relinquish the thrill that handling them gave him.

The small boy undoes the bandage about his thumb and presses against the cut; he knows that it will hurt, but still . . . So Staggard read, reread and fumbled these documents. Their destruction should be a matter of formality; when one obliterates one's past one should pay the action the tribute of a ceremonial.

SOUP MAKES THE WHOLE MEAL TASTE BETTER

When you should eat vegetable soup!

Really good vegetable soup is a splendidly filling and hearty dish. It appeals most when you are more than usually hungry. After a good day's work, following vigorous exercise in the open air, or at the midday meal it is both nourishing and stimulating.

Campbell's Vegetable Soup is real food, tempting to the appetite and rich with sustaining, healthful nourishment.

Fifteen fresh garden vegetables. Big barley grains. Alphabet macaroni. Broth of choice beef. Tasty herbs and seasoning. Thirty-two different ingredients combine to make Campbell's Vegetable as wholesome and satisfying a soup as you can place on your table.

21 kinds 12 cents a can



My game of golf is something classy
I wield a fearsome, wicked brassy
And when I've laid them all a stymie
Straight home to Campbell's Soup I hie me!



Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED-AND-WHITE LABEL

Later this evening he would sit down before the fire, tear each paper slowly across and across again—feed them, bit by bit, to the flames . . . He put them back into his coat pocket. He hung the coat in the closet off the hall. Then he went to his bedroom, where his servant was now laying out some clothes.

He changed from his office suit, not to don anything approaching afternoon formality—that would not be within the scope of the part of rugged self-made man which he had planned for himself—but into garments not creased by sitting before a desk. He selected his tie carefully; he admired himself cordially in the mirror. Then, in the hall, he stopped, reached into the closet and brought forth his overcoat. He put his hand in the inside pocket to take out the papers that he had bought from Blaney. But his hand came back empty. It was better to have them with him. It wasn't particularly safe to leave them around the flat.

Besides, it rather intrigued him, the thought of proposing to Rose Bellamy, winning her because of his rugged honesty, while a few feet from her would repose evidence of a guilt that would make her shrink from him. He grinned at the thought. Marriage was to him no sacrament; it was a means whereby ambition could be gratified.

So he put on the coat, descended in the elevator to the street floor and stepped again into the waiting limousine. Ten minutes later he was admitted to the Bellamy home. It was a pleasant home, an old-fashioned brown-stone house in the Murray Hill section. It was dignified; he thought that he preferred it to a house farther uptown on the Avenue.

The manservant held out his hands for Staggard's hat and coat. The visitor remembered. He thrust his hand into the coat pocket and transferred several envelopes to the inner pocket of his jacket. Then he entered the drawing room.

Many men had loved Rose Bellamy. None of them characterized her as a flirt. She was not that sort. They believed her when she told them all, regretfully, that she did not love them.

Of late she had begun to wonder what love was, if it perhaps could exist without one's knowing it. She was drawn strongly to Staggard. He had achieved. By his own strength of character, not by some inheritance of millions, he was winning a place for himself. That was the sort of man she admired. She wondered if her admiration really amounted to love. There was another man, and for him she felt a feeling that was different from that which Staggard inspired. She trembled when young Allen was near her.

Yet Allen had never done anything. He was a gentleman and that was all. That all was not enough—for her.

Well, she would soon know. For, being a woman, she knew that Staggard would speak when she gave him opportunity. She was giving it to him today.

"Aren't you," she asked, "neglecting business? Afternoon tea is for idlers, not men of affairs."

He sat down, deliberately, as he did all things. She was giving him, he knew, an opening. He took it.

"My business, Miss Bellamy, is you," he told her.

Well, she was face to face with it. She

could look the other way, or meet the issue. She didn't love him, but—she respected him, was fascinated by him, felt that love might come. So she said:

"I don't think I understand."

"I love you," he told her. Oh, he'd planned it carefully, and he had decided to dispense with rhetoric! Simply, as became the rugged, honest, self-made man. "And I want you to marry me," he said.

She was silent a moment. "I don't think that I love you," she finally said.

He smiled, a humble sort of smile. "Of course you don't. I wouldn't expect that. But in time—perhaps—"

He stopped; he waited for her to speak. Uncertainly, her voice the least bit shaky, she said: "I—I cannot be sure. I respect you—tremendously. Of all the men I've ever met, it seems to me that you are the most honest. And honesty, I think, is the greatest thing in the world."

Inwardly he smiled. It pleased his sense of chicane, of underhandedness, this praise of his honesty, when all the time he had upon his person the evidence that would damn him to anyone.

"You are too kind," he told her. "I—I do try—oh, Miss Bellamy—Rose—please—"

"I will marry you," she said.

A second later she was in his arms; a second after that she knew that she did not love him. There had been another man, and only yesterday, because he had achieved nothing particularly in life, she had sent him away. He had been a gentleman, charming but—without achievement. Now, as Staggard's lips touched her own, she knew that she loved the other man.

But honesty, keeping one's word—these were the only things that mattered. Rose Bellamy was that sort.

And so twenty minutes later, when she had dismissed Staggard, she went weeping upstairs to her bedroom while Staggard went swaggering, smilingly, toward his car. He had succeeded. She loved him; anyway, she'd marry him; love meant nothing to him, even the possible love of so adorable a creature as Rose Bellamy.

Inside the car he patted his breast pocket, within which reposed the confession and the other papers. When he reached home, having achieved the final ambition of his life, he'd hold a party . . . He took the envelopes out of his pocket. The one he sought was not among them. Then he felt in his overcoat pocket, from which he had transferred them when the Bellamy servant had taken his coat.

The confession was not there. His somewhat highly colored face went dead white. Ass! Fool! When he'd transferred them he'd dropped them . . . By now, undoubtedly, the butler had handed them to Rose Bellamy. The envelope had not been sealed . . . She'd read the papers!

Harshly he spoke through the tube to the chauffeur. Ten minutes after he'd left her drawing room he was speaking to Rose Bellamy again. He'd made no mistake. Look at the traces of tears on her cheeks, her eyes a bit swollen, red. She'd learned what he was. But there was a chance. A profession of utter frankness, of love having awakened him to the final knowledge that honesty was above all . . .

"Rose, I had to come back to you," he said. "I've deceived you. Fifteen years

ago I was a thief; I stole. I saved myself by confession. I've never done a dishonest thing since."

She stared at him. "A thief?"

He bowed his head. "Yes," he said humbly. "And I release you from your promise to marry me."

That was the final stroke. She knew all about him anyway; no woman on earth would have failed to read the contents of that envelope. By pretending that his conscience forced his confession to her he'd discount all the revulsion toward him that the reading must have aroused in her. And then he heard the words of his doom. For him no place in the social sun!

"I thank you for your release, Mr. Staggard. I—I am sorry, dreadfully sorry, but—"

He never remembered what else she said. He vaguely knew that it was gentle, pitiful. But he wanted to strike her, to crush her slim throat between his two hard hands. He'd have done it, too, but for the fact that her menservants were doubtless within hearing. And so he left her.

So consumed with anger was he that he forgot the envelope, forgot everything save the fact that, while he might make money, the things he wanted would be forever denied to him. For he recognized the soul of Rose Bellamy. If he announced an engagement to one of her friends—and only among her friends could he find what he wanted, needed—she would insist that he tell his past . . . Rigid, uncompromising . . .

The Jap servant let him into his apartment. He flung himself before the open fire, staring gloomily, hatefully, into the flames.

The servant came to him. "Here is an envelope, sir. I found it as I was about to press your coat. In the pocket."

Wild-eyed, Staggard stared at the envelope that held his confession.

He realized what he had done. This second coat was the one he had worn to call upon Rose Bellamy. The first one was the one that he had worn from the office. He cursed the habit that made him, in fall or spring, affect always the same sort of coat. The two were almost identical. Envelopes with papers were always in his pockets. He had not examined them when he had transferred them to his jacket in the Bellamy home. And all the time, when he had thought that she had read the proofs of his guilt, those proofs were at home in another coat!

If he hadn't confessed . . . Why, when he had worn a coat, did he keep it? And why, oh why, had he assumed that Rose Bellamy had read papers that did not belong to her?

Suddenly he knew that she would have died before prying into a matter that did not concern her. He was seeing things a bit more clearly than ever in his life before. Of course she'd never have stopped to read his private papers. But he'd assumed that she would . . . He strode to the open fire. Into it he hurled the evidence that he had bought today from Blaney.

But he knew what all men must, soon or late, know: neither flames nor water, craft nor cunning, man nor devil, can obliterate the past.

For the past is not written on pieces of paper that may be destroyed. It is written in the hearts of men.

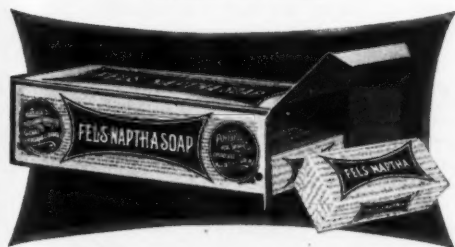


The soap that radiates FELS-NAPHTHA Cleanliness!



You can tell Fels-Naptha
by its clean naphtha odor

Campers are enthusiastic Fels-Naptha users. Even with cold water it cuts grease from pans, it makes clothes thoroughly clean, and removes grit and grime from hands.



Buy Fels-Naptha in the convenient ten-bar carton. The original and genuine naphtha soap, in the red-and-green wrapper.

There is deeper cleanliness to clothes than you can see. A kind that goes below the surface, where dirt is routed from every thread.

Soap alone will not produce it. But you get it from real naphtha, that amazing dirt-loosener, combined with good soap in the Fels-Naptha way.

Clothes sop up perspiration, and dirt sticks. Then they need the deep-down cleanliness of Fels-Naptha. The real naphtha goes through every tiny thread, and silently, gently makes the dirt let go. The sudsy water flushes it away completely. A good rinse, and clothes are safely washed—sweet, and hygienically clean.

Fels-Naptha sends its Cleanliness also into the kitchen, the bathroom, and to every part of the house where there is dirt to be washed away and things to be made sanitary.

Fels-Naptha is more than soap. It is more than soap and naphtha. It is the exclusive Fels-Naptha blend of splendid soap and real naphtha that gives you the benefit of both these two great cleaners at one time, and in one economical golden bar.

Get Fels-Naptha, and know the deeper Fels-Naptha Cleanliness.

PROVE the cleanliness of clothes washed with Fels-Naptha. Send 2c in stamps for a sample bar. Address Fels-Naptha Soap, Philadelphia

FELS-NAPHTHA

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPHTHA ODOR © 1923, Fels & Co. Philadelphia

Jemima Made Over

(Continued from page 44)

it with exact and snug dimensions and McQuarg's eyes glittered into a smile.

"And now what?" asked Jemima.

He said: "I can keep the front under range—"

"Give me Barney's gun and I'll look out for the back," said Jemima. "When must I shoot?"

McQuarg lifted his voice.

"The man that comes six steps nearer any door or window in this house gets lead!" he announced.

There was no answer. In the dimness of their lair he saw Jemima smile. "That scared them, didn't it? I've always heard that a mob was easy scared."

"It's the devil to handle them, though," McQuarg admitted. "They ain't a mite reasonable. These fellers now don't keer so derved much for their money—unless they mean to get away with it before the sheriff calls. But they've got sore heads and they're half drunk and they're as dangerous as a locoed beast. They want to kill some'thin'. I've seen queer things."

Two fellers, out'n out strangers to the parts they was travelin' through, and nice, quiet boys, got herded into a cabin up Montany way and besieged by a posse all day, shootin' and cursin', and they not allowed to come out and explain themselves. The dern fool posse had got a notion they was some hoss thieves they was after. When the two chaps surrendered and agreed to git hung that evenin' and came out limpin' and bleedin' with their hands above their heads, why the besiegin' gang knowed right away they'd been barkin' up the wrong tree. And the rest of that twenty-four hours was just plain celebratin'. They was bound, you see, to treat them pore devils like kings . . .

"Well," Peter sighed sharply, "I hope that fool Barney boy is travelin'. If I hadn't betted on some of the old crowd that knows him, the sheriff or a number of real folks, bein' on the spot right soon after these hoboos, I'd hev told Barney to make his get-away."

While McQuarg talked, made loquacious by excitement, the two prisoners had posted themselves at convenient loopholes and were ready. There were several raucous summonses from without, something in the nature of a consultation and

then a pattering of bullets. McQuarg laughed.

"Send out Barney and we won't hurt you!" they shouted.

No answer was required for this. They rushed simultaneously the front door and the back and Jemima, laughing with a catch in her breath, made her gun bark in unison with McQuarg's. She hit her man in the boot and hid her eyes. McQuarg unhatted his quarry. There were no more rushes. After that followed intermittent firing. At last a bullet found some chink and McQuarg, starting, cried out softly and put a hand against his shoulder.

"Sacred Maria!" cried Jemima loudly. "You're hit!"

An outburst of applause showed that the besieging party rejoiced in this information.

McQuarg took away his hand and laughed. "Jes' touched me!" he said as loudly as she had spoken; then he added, chuckling: "What you said must 'a' turned the bullet, Jem! Keep away from that side of the room."

In fact from outside there began to be a systematic search for that vulnerable spot, then presently, a second rush.

Peter groaned. "If we really hit any of 'em, Jem, our game is up. Aim for the ground. Why don't them sensible fellers hurry up and—come!"

Jemima bent her white, keen face to her loophole, flushed suddenly, dropped her gun and wailed: "It's Barney, Peter, it's Barney coming back. He's riding up behind them—O my God! My God!"

Barney had chosen the manner of his appearance with audacious cleverness. Anything advancing upon this pack, anything in flight from it, was inevitable prey, but this slim, amiable and laughing youngster, trotting confidently from behind into their midst, wan-faced, indeed, and dusty, but clear-eyed and entirely sweet mannered, was like a contrary wind in a full sail.

"Say, boys," drawled Barney, dropping down among them and holding out a roll of bills, "I guess you've come after this. I knowed you were good friends to me and to that little schoolmarm wife of mine, so, since I was almighty anxious to get off an order for her birthday present, I borrowed your money. I knowed I had a cache

with enough and some over to pay you back before noon today. Why, you sure ain't sore at me, are you?"

The aggrieved and astonished dropping of his voice was their undoing. One burst into a tremendous roar of mirth. Others succumbed to that contagion. The roll of bills was entrusted to the oldest man; thereafter they clapped Barney's shoulder, wished his wife a happy birthday, mounted their ponies and rode fast away, "to intercept the sheriff." Their raucous shouting and guffaws dropped into the stillness of the August plain.

Barney came slowly into the opened house. He closed the door, leaned against it, turned his back to Jemima and, dropping a contorted face into his bent arm, sobbed like a despairing boy.

"I always knowed," he choked, "that I couldn't keep your love. Now that I'm a drunkard and a coward—and a thief—I've lost you. Oh, my God, Jem, I hev lost you!"

Jemima turned him about with her two gentle, powder-scorched hands.

"Don't you ever be afraid of me like that again!" she cried in a sort of tender anguish. Then she shook him with her hands tightened on the edges of his coat, and began to cry. "I—I have been all shamed," she wept, "I don't feel good. I will never feel so good again. I'm all broken up inside. I'll have to be made over. Barney, teach me to forget my soul, to—to love you, with loyalty and courage and self-sacrifice—like Peter McQuarg—like dear Peter McQuarg!" She buried herself in her husband's arms, trembling down into the strength of him.

Peter, sitting where she could not see him and absently nursing his wounded arm, showed a face stern and happy, irradiated with a cold and shining joy, the joy of an evangelist, the joy of a successful reformer. And his lips unconsciously shaped themselves to a tune. McQuarg whistled in soft spiritual triumph:

With Thy favored sheep, O, place me,
Nor among the goats abase me,
But to Thy right hand upraise me.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
Yet—good Lord, in grace complying
Rescue me from fires undying.

Ellen's Luncheon

(Continued from page 29)

that he was sitting upon Flurry's old red sweater, and that his hat was revolving in his big hands, and that Lizzie-Kate was sweeping dexterously out of sight several small garments not usually displayed to bachelor eyes—unconscious in fact of all material and external matters, and desperately fumbling for the casual words and smiles that would save him from betraying his inner agitation.

"I don't know," Ellen said, enchantingly small and childish and sorry. "I've a good mind to walk over to Mrs. Callahan's and make the peace with her," she submitted, with a rising inflection.

"I'll—I'll walk with you," Clem began,

clearing his throat and trembling like a man who sees a lode of gold shining in pebbly earth.

"Oh, I wouldn't take you out of your way for the world!" said Ellen considerably.

"I'm goin' that way anyway," Clem assured her.

It was sunset, June sunset, and the world was flooded with glory, and filled with men and women streaming home along the broken sidewalks, and windows flashing back the red light, and children squawking and running like scattering fowls. There were magnificent elms along the shabby street, elms rich in rustling leaves, and the ends of the irregular lanes lost themselves

in gold haze—a haze charitably disguising into beauty even heaps of rusting old iron, and out-dated stables, and minor factories, and lumber piles.

The air was warm, moving and alive, but still sweet and scented with kitchen fires and cut grass and now and then a clean rift of bacon smoke. Everybody was out, murmuring and laughing and exchanging cheerful views of this punctual world. Men jaded from hot offices, and women jaded from hot kitchens, met at the bakery door, and the children whose small hands they held exchanged shy smiles.

"Ellen," said Mrs. Callahan dispassionately, from the stove, when Ellen and Clem



How do you picture the woman you would like to be? Do you think of her as a happy wife—a happy mother?

The Woman You would Like to Be—

How do you picture her? A happy wife—a happy mother—a great artist, or an accomplished woman of the world? In a hundred ways—it lies in your power to make yourself the woman you would like to be. Below you will read of one way—simple as it is, no girl can afford to neglect it.

Do you wish, more than anything else, to be beautiful? To have a face that charms and attracts the people about you?

Make up your mind, then, that you will have a beautiful skin; that you will not rest until you have made your skin absolutely clear, smooth, flawless.

For how can woman's face be lovely and attractive if her skin is disfigured by blackheads—by ugly little blemishes? if the pores are too large? if her nose is shiny with oil?

Any of these faults can be overcome

If you are troubled with any of these faults—begin, now, to overcome them. You can make your skin what you will, for each day it is changing; old skin dies and new takes its

place. Give the *new skin* the special treatment it should have, and see how smooth and lovely you can keep it—how quickly the defects in it will disappear.

You will find the right treatment for your special type of skin in the booklet of famous skin treatments that is wrapped around each cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap. Complete treatments for all the commoner skin troubles are given in this booklet. Two of these famous treatments are reproduced below.

By using these Woodbury skin treatments regularly, thousands of girls and women have overcome the faults in their complexion and have gained the lovely clear, soft skin they longed for.

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today, and begin, tonight, to

give *your skin* the treatment that will make it fresh, radiant, flawless, as a beautiful woman's skin should be.

A 25-cent cake of Woodbury's lasts a month or six weeks for regular toilet use, including any of the special Woodbury treatments. You can also get Woodbury's in convenient 3-cake boxes at any drug store or toilet goods counter.

Send today for this new 10-cent offer!

For 10 cents we will send you a miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations, containing week-end packages of Woodbury's Facial Soap, Facial Cream, Facial Powder, together with the treatment booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch."

Send for this set today. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1606 Spring Grove Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio. If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1606 Sherbrooke St., Perth, Ontario. English agents: H. C. Quelch & Co., 4 Ludgate Square, London, E. C. 4.

FOR CONSPICUOUS NOSE PORES

To reduce conspicuous nose pores, use this special treatment:

Wring a soft cloth from very hot water, lather it with Woodbury's Facial Soap, then hold it to your face. When the heat has expanded the pores, rub in *very gently* a fresh lather of Woodbury's. Repeat this hot water and lather application several times, *stopping at once* if your nose feels sensitive. Then finish by rubbing the nose for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

BLACKHEADS ARE A CONFESSION

To keep your skin free from blackheads, use the following treatment:

Every night before retiring, apply hot cloths to your face until the skin is reddened. Then with a rough wash cloth work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap and rub it into the pores thoroughly, always with an upward and outward motion. Rinse with clear hot water, then with cold—the colder the better. If possible rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

reached her kitchen door. She slid a smoking pudding dish upon the wet boards of her sink, making one more scar upon the scarred wood.

"How do, Mis' Callahan," said Ellen.

She sat down; Clem remained silent. Annie Callahan Curley's baby looked up, solemn and hostile, from the mud-colored floor where his little romper gave a striking instance of protective coloring.

There was a silence. Then Ellen said: "Goodness—don't that pudding smell good!"

Mrs. Callahan glanced at it dispassionately, with no softening of her grave face.

"There's some likes home cooking," she observed.

Silence again. Ellen made a fresh start:

"Here's the thing, Mis' Callahan," she said bravely. "I do want these girl friends of mine to have the best, you know, and yet I hate to ask you—with all you have to do—to come over to that hot kitchen of Lizzie-Kate's and fuss with that wonderful chicken of yours. I don't suppose I could learn to cook it?"

Mrs. Callahan looked unconcerned.

"Oh, you'll be able to find them lots of better things than that!" she said lightly and evenly, measuring baking powder into flour with a quick dexterous jerk of the opened tin. Mrs. Callahan scorned set measures for seasoning or shortening.

"What do you think?" Ellen, undaunted, pursued patiently. "Do you think it's bad for mama, cooking so much? You know her better than anyone else—I'll never forget what you did for her when papa died. The priest said mama might have died herself if it wasn't for Mrs. Callahan, Clem," Ellen assured her escort seriously. "Mrs. Callahan sent over chicken soup every day for a month—and that was every mouthful of food mama took. I guess the Callahans got pretty sick of chicken," said Ellen adroitly.

"I guess it didn't hurt them," Mrs. Callahan said grimly.

This was not much, but it was something. The girl was encouraged.

"Is it broilers you use in the creamed chicken, Mrs. Callahan?"

"They're best, of course."

"And do you fry them first?"

"Well, you can."

Silence. Then Ellen rose. "Well, I'll be going on. I want to see mama. I hate to have her slaving for my friends, but if you think it isn't too much for her—"

Mrs. Callahan yielded a reluctant inch. "I don't think it would do her no hurt."

Ellen and Clem departed.

"Ellen," said Mrs. Callahan, when they were on the kitchen porch. The girl turned back. "Maybe I'll get one of the kids to write out the creamed chicken for you tonight and send it over by Martin," said Mrs. Callahan, very busy with her biscuit dough. "Get in a quart of cream and some instant tapioca."

"And how many chickens ought I have?"

"Well—" Mrs. Callahan came to the door now, her expression once more its usual pleasant self and her eyes interested. "There'll be you and Lizzie-Kate and your mama and your four lady friends—seven of you—" she mused. "I'd get three—wait a minute. I'll get them for you, Ellen," promised Agnes Callahan wholeheartedly, "and then I'll step over Friday

and get them started cooking. So don't concern yourself—"

"Well, then you'll be at the luncheon too?" cried Ellen loyally.

"I will not. You couldn't get me there under chloroform," the older woman assured her. They parted upon a friendly laugh.

So there were great friendliness and great doings in the Kane kitchen forty-eight hours later. The day began with scorching heat at dawn; it was a day of lowered awnings and wilted collars and parsimonious blots of hot shade in blazing streets.

But Ellen had foreseen this the day before, and had bought eight tall glasses and eight lemonade spoons in a department store, and her mother and sister had washed the straw and chaff and stuck tissue paper from them, and there was to be iced tea—lots of it. Mrs. Callahan and Mrs. Murphy arrived early, in time to direct Mart and Joe Kane in the enlarging of the table; everything was in encouraging shape as Ellen left the house for the office at ten minutes past eight.

Mrs. Murphy and Lizzie-Kate had humbly begged not to be present at the luncheon, preferring to remain invisible, and serve. But Ellen would not hear of this—she persisted that she only wanted a family meal, filling, delicious, unpretentious—just a convenience to friends who chanced to be passing that way, and in no sense a social overture of her own. Her mother and sister must of course share it. As for Mrs. Callahan, she flatly refused to do anything but come in and help.

Ellen and the ladies could not arrive before twenty-seven minutes past twelve. The wedding was a short car ride away, at half-past two. There would be but an hour and a half of strain, and to that Lizzie-Kate, with her hair crimped, and her mother, in her best black silk, felt equal.

At twelve all was in order. The baby was asleep. The ladies of the family were dressed. The table was set and the tea made and a bowl of chopped ice waiting. The chicken, the stuffed potatoes, the vegetables simmered, and were tasted and approved, and simmered again. The hot rolls were covered with a white napkin, the homemade strawberry ice cream with ice and salt and an old gunny sack sacred to this purpose, the maple nut marshmallow cake stood in magnificence and perfection upon a hand-painted plate that Loretta Keating had given Lizzie-Kate for a wedding present. Cascading uncomfortably upon the ice in the ice box were seven carefully arranged plates of lobster salad, and Lizzie-Kate went about saying mentally a hundred times: "Well, it's only a home lunch. This is all you get!"

The shades in the dining room were drawn, a glint of bright sunlight touched the dome of currant jelly, and the saltines, and the olives, and the green pickles, and the chow-chow with its ornate plated spoon from Niagara Falls, and the freesias delicately arranged with maidenhair, in the center of the table. At each place was a frilled paper cup of salted almonds, and what was always called the "Sheffield type bonbon" was neatly loaded with candy. Ellen, browsing idly over a fashionable magazine months ago, had come upon an illustration of the "Sheffield type bonbon" and had sent three dollars for it, and felt well satisfied. It certainly added a tone.

This half-hour of waiting was hard for the three matrons. They peeped, murmured, tasted, loitered about. Flurry had been sent to Kate Oliver, the baby slept on like a baby angel. Mrs. Callahan said she was only going to wait for one good look at the company.

At last the sound of girls' voices was heard under the heavy foliage of the elms, motionless in the hot spring noon, and then the chip-chipping of feet and the bang of the gate. The women in the kitchen fluttered, stirred, advanced, reconnoitered and retreated, finally went to meet their guests with a sort of surprised spontaneity—well, here they all were!

Miss Carter, who was lean and dyspeptic and eye-glassed, came first; then her sister, who was thin and had a bad skin; and last, plump, jolly Miss Brice. Miss Brice's friend, unfortunately, could not come. So that meant that one place must be spirited away from the table before the churning and twisting guests all were introduced and had laid aside silk coats and bags and had filed into the dining room.

Cream of tomato soup first; it was perfection. Mrs. Callahan decided to stay in the kitchen, at the last minute, and simplify serving and clearing. Ellen and Lizzie-Kate and their mother ate their soup; but Miss Brice would not take anything with cream in it, she was on a no-fat diet, and the Carters had to be careful of acids.

Then the marvelous chicken. And now it developed that the older Miss Carter was an out-and-out vegetarian; she was pleasant about it, taking some peas and just a taste of the mushrooms.

"I am not going to let you put that wonderful piece of chicken on my plate, Mrs. Murphy," said Miss Brice frankly, forking it back to the platter with a lack of ceremony that outraged the secret heart of her old hostess. "Nothing with gravy or starch."

"I feel the same way," murmured the younger Miss Carter, with a shy smile. "I'll tell you, Mrs. Murphy. You know how it is. I've been having what they call a duodenal infection—have you ever heard of that?"

"My God, no!" whispered Mrs. Murphy, awed, her stony gaze never leaving the speaker.

"They won't let me eat anything but gluten bread and stewed vegetables and fruit," pursued Miss Carter. "But I'm going on a perfect carouse today and have just a tiny bit of that wonderful looking chicken—no, just the wing, please—no, truly, no more, for I shall just waste it! And a tiny bit of gravy—"

"I simply have to diet," said Miss Brice. "I'm engaged to be married, you know, and my young man looks like a crane. He says he'll love me up to one hundred and fifty pounds, and not a pound over, and I'm one hundred and sixty-eight now. So I've cut myself down to three hundred calories a day—no, thanks, no bread. No, no jelly—looks delicious! If you could see me, standing outside of bakery windows with the tears running down my face, you'd feel for me. I don't eat gravies, sauces, starches, sweets, oils, fats or sugars—"

"At which meal don't ye?" Mrs. Murphy, shocked out of her affronted silence, asked in involuntary pity.

"At all! Never! Not at any!" Miss Brice said. "Take away those rolls, I

What ten million motor cars have taught women about their skin

The method they have learned to depend on

Two unbroken lines of cars wind along the popular motor roads. Everyone is motoring—week-ending at the beach, or the country club, or just driving for the pleasure of it. Fine dust settles in their skin and the wind brings a dry tightness.

Yet many women's complexions are younger and lovelier than ever before!

The severe exposure of motoring has taught them how important it is to find the right way to care for their skin, keep it beautiful and supple in spite of all exposure.

Today millions of women have found a method so wonderful in results that in all the world it is used more than any other—Pond's Two Creams. They leave your skin softer, more supple than you could have dreamed. They give just that finishing touch of loveliness you have always wanted.

A fine light cleansing that never leaves your face heavy with cream—gives the beautiful suppleness you want and then wipes entirely off! This is why millions of women prefer to cleanse with Pond's Cold Cream.

A marvelous freshening, an adding of youth—and unfailing protection. No wonder that the women of the United States alone use several millions of jars and tubes of Pond's Vanishing Cream every year!

TRY THIS FAMOUS METHOD

See the wonderful improvement in your skin

Do this tonight. With the finger tips apply Pond's Cold Cream freely. The very fine oil in it is able to penetrate every pore of your skin. Let it stay a minute—now wipe it off with a soft cloth. The black on the cloth will show you how carefully this cream cleanses. Your skin looks fresh and is beautifully supple.

Then, in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream lightly over your whole face. If you wish, rouge—powder. How smooth and velvety your face feels! How new and charming the reflection in your mirror! The appearance of your skin for the whole day will prove to you how wonderful for your skin these two creams are.

Always after a motor or railroad trip, cleanse with Pond's Cold Cream and finish with the Vanishing Cream and powder. To see how these two creams will improve your skin use this method regularly. Begin now by buying both creams in jars or tubes in any drug or department store. The Pond's Extract Co.



removes coarsening dirt—restores suppleness
defies exposure—holds the powder



Photo by Victor Georg

Florence Nash says she likes Pond's Cold Cream because it leaves her face feeling so refreshed—not heavy and oily. And that Pond's Vanishing Cream really keeps her skin wonderfully smooth and fresh.

Exposure starts these troubles or makes them worse

Sunburn, Windburn, Chapping

The daily repetition of weather damage does more to age your skin than any other single factor. But the process is so gradual that except on specially severe occasions you do not notice it until your skin has definitely coarsened. Do not let this happen. For the insidious everyday exposure use the same method that saves your skin from the excessive damage of a long motor ride or a day on the beach. Keep your skin properly oiled by a nightly cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream. Then always in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. It forms a delicate but sure protection. This method will keep your skin smooth and young years longer than would otherwise be possible.

Premature Wrinkles, Scaling, Peeling

These are especially the troubles of a dry skin. To avoid them you must protect yourself from all exposure and keep your skin soft day and night. Cleanse with plenty of Pond's Cold Cream nightly and leave some on over night. This will give your skin the oil it needs so badly and keep it from scaling and peeling. Then it will not develop little lines that grow into wrinkles.

But do not let the exposure of the day undo the results of this nightly oiling. Every morning smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream liberally, prevent your skin from drying out again. Always carry a tube with you on motor trips to counteract their drying, ageing influence.

That Distressing Shine

Sometimes shine is due to a dry, tight skin, and motoring or even the slightest daily exposure aggravates the condition. You must apply an extra amount of Pond's Cold Cream at night after the cleansing and let it stay on. See how gladly your skin will absorb the fine light oil of this cream, how it will soften and relax and the shine disappear. Put on the Vanishing Cream in the morning to keep this suppleness through the day and be sure to carry it with you and use it frequently on any occasion of unusual exposure.

Accumulation of dirt and fat in the pores

Sometimes the oil in your skin accumulates in the glands and attracts dirt and bacteria—dust that blows into your face when motoring, or the daily soot of city streets. Your complexion is dulled, disfigured. You need specially careful cleansings. Pond's Cold Cream is so light it penetrates the glands and takes out excess oil and dirt together. Do this every night and always after any motor or railroad trip, and you will avoid a dull, muddy skin.

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Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

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feel a sort of weakness coming over me," she added, to Ellen. "You know, you never take it off until you're just ravening with hunger," she told her hostess.

"Take what off?" said Mrs. Murphy, bewildered.

"Fat—fat—fat!" the girl answered. "You get so that you can't think of anything else. My brother and I are doing it, and we compare notes at night. No sugar, thanks—is there sugar in it? I use saccharine."

"Next week," said Miss Carter, "a friend and I are going to try this new idea—nothing but raw food."

"God save us—like the horses!" muttered Mrs. Murphy.

"Lettuce, apples, nuts and sun-sweetened prunes and raisins," said Miss Carter. "Grated carrots—they're delicious."

"Grated—holy mother!" Ellen heard her mother murmur.

"We tried the chop and pineapple diet," Miss Rose Carter contributed with animation. "You eat a hot mutton chop and two slices of pineapple at every meal, and nothing else. It seems that the dietary balance is perfect—it's like that old famous diet of lettuce and chocolate, or the eggs and milk diet—"

"You're going to have some salad?" Ellen, whose face was somewhat flushed, asked at about this point. Her mother had fallen silent.

"Oh, no, thank you! Truly, I've eaten enormously. I've had more than I usually eat."

Miss Carter had a few peas, two mushrooms and the crust of a roll, buttered, for her meal. Her sister had a chicken wing, some gravy and half a roll. Miss Brice had some white meat carefully scraped of the tapioca gravy, some peas and the lettuce from under her lobster salad. A platter full of chicken returned to the kitchen; the candy and the rolls, the jelly and the big cake, the stuffed potatoes and the ice cream, were untouched.

"I usually allow a hundred for luncheon, fifty for breakfast and a hundred and fifty for dinner," said Miss Brice, of calories. "But I've certainly had a hundred and fifty here. I shan't eat anything at the wedding, I know that!"

"You've et nothing at all here," Mrs. Murphy said flatly, too demoralized by the turn of events to think of manners. "I never heard the like! Horse food, and pineapples with lamb chops, and calleries and hay, for all I know—I don't know what a body would be eating that way for at all," pursued Mrs. Murphy, her voice falling to its customary note of vague complaint. "There's no blood in bran and hay and carrots, unless it'd be for an animal that ate it. And the two of you look as if you wasn't eating enough, even of sawdust and raw turnip!" she added, half apologetic for her own boldness.

"Oh, we eat enough!" Miss Carter said with a light little laugh. This kind little old peasant woman, with her apple cheeks and her nights of deep, childlike sleep, naturally had no idea of what complications might go wrong in the human system.

"As for you," Mrs. Murphy continued, her keen old eye now turned to Miss Brice, "God help us all! Didn't there used to be fat people and thin people, the way God made them? You'd never sit down to a meal, I should think, that you wouldn't be thinking more of the fats and thins and

the starching and the blueing it would do to you, rather than say your grace that you had it at all! Calleries, is it? And a few years ago it was microbes, the way many a one wouldn't cross herself with holy water for fear she'd be poisoned in the church itself!"

"Well, I guess there's a lot in what you say, Mrs. Murphy," said Miss Brice, laughing good temperedly. "And yet, you know, it is nice to have your clothes comfortable, and not to be puffing on a hot day just because you're greedy!"

"Some's fat and some's thin, and the Lord et what His friends did," Mrs. Murphy said dazedly but stubbornly. And when Ellen and her guests suddenly rustled away from the scene, declaring themselves already late for the wedding, the old woman sat on, puzzled, baffled and vaguely angry, in the pleasantly shaded room.

Lizzie-Kate, who had been superintending the baby's luncheon, and Mrs. Callahan, who had been lurking in the kitchen, now came in.

"Whatever happened the lot of them?" said Mrs. Callahan amazedly. "Was the fowl high on us that they'd not eat it? The shame that come over me when that platter come back into the kitchen will foller me to the grave!"

She seated herself before the tumbled napkins and the broken rolls. The great column of pink ice cream was melting, something like a sixteenth of the great cake had been cut, the candy retained its perfect formation.

"I don't know what's come to them at all!" Mrs. Murphy said drearily. "You'd wonder they wouldn't fold their clean napkins at least. All they done was say what they couldn't eat, and sure it was nothin' but elephant food I heard them talk about! A couple of Zulus out of Roosia would eat more than they done! It was all hay and bran and carrots and middlin's—I declare it doesn't sound Christian. There was never anyone at home that didn't have a taste of potato cake and tea when there'd be company in, but faith you could fit up me fine young ladies in any stable in this country!"

"Maybe they had a little snack in the train," submitted Lizzie-Kate, nibbling a nut and marshmallow loaded fragment of cake.

"Ellen said all she wanted for them was toast and an omelette or some such trashy stuff," said Mrs. Callahan, with a troubled and puzzled look. "I'll bet she's got the grand mad on us all!"

"I'll bet she's fit to be tied that we made such a fuss," Ellen's sister said musingly. "She hates a fuss, you know, and her face got perfectly blazing as they went on refusing, and picking at their food like a lot of monkeys!"

"We'll have a scene with her—sure, I don't know where she'd get the temper she has on her at all," said Mrs. Murphy fearfully.

"Oh, mama, papa was a holy terror!" said Lizzie-Kate unfilially but affectionately.

"Well, he was—in a way—" his relict conceded reluctantly. "He tuk a little dish of curds I had on me table one day—" she remembered, smiling.

The conversation rambled on comfortably; even with the melting ice cream confronting them, no one of the three practical

women felt inclined to move. The afternoon was blazing hot, and the dining room and kitchen windows faced west.

The kitchen, they knew, was a welter of sticky plates, cooling food, congealed vegetables, half filled saucepans, platters, plates, bowls and cups. Later, well before supper time, they would all get to work and reduce the place to what was supposed to be cleanliness and order.

Meanwhile they idled and chatted, nibbling, drinking from the new iced tea glasses, growing more and more critical of their guests all the time and more restively and resentfully apprehensive of Ellen's anger when she returned.

What finally interrupted them was confusion in the yard. Who was it—what was it—God save us, it looked like a funeral! muttered the women as they rose to their feet and craned anxiously at the window.

Mart—it was Mart Murphy, for one—Mrs. Murphy's bachelor son. Mart, anyway, and who else? Who was it? Was it Lucy Mullen and all the young children?

They met them at the kitchen door. Lucy it was, a pale, sad young woman in streaming, shabby weeds. And with Lucy were her two big boys, Willie and Paul, and her two small girls, Gertie and May, and the old baby, a stout, curly-headed girl of three, and the new baby, a drooling, stolid child of fourteen months.

Lucy had not seen the Murphys and Mrs. Callahan since her husband's funeral two months ago; as she came in she burst into bitter weeping, and all the children, as well as Lizzie-Kate and her mother, cried too.

"To think that you—and me—Lizzie-Kate—that made our first communions together—and me wid the whole crowd of them at Tom's grave!" sobbed Lucy, hiccuping, shaking, clinging first to Lizzie-Kate and then to Mrs. Callahan, and then collapsing into a chair and gathering into her forlorn young arms as many of the children, besides the whimpering baby, as she could encircle at once.

"Mama, look here!" said Mart eagerly. "I met the whole gang of them streaming down the cemetery road in the blazing heat, and they've not had a bite of lunch, and here was Lucy going to take them to White Plains, and half kill herself—say, can't these kids have some of this cake?"

"I couldn't run the whole crowd of them into any restyrant," pleaded Lucy pathetically, her eyes brimming again. "I'm kilt as it is, what with them all weepin' over Tom's stone and yelling to him to come back. 'Papa! May says—'"

But Lucy was again overcome at this memory, and wept with her face against May's curls.

"And I haven't the money for it, Mart," she added with dignity, regaining her self-control suddenly. "I have me two little houses to rent, but I have the whole of them to feed and dress on a hundred and thirty-three dollars a month. And I had to paper one of me tenants, the way he would have walked out on me. If it was only fried potatoes in a restyrant it'd cost me a dollar before the whole of them was filled up! And to fast for a day," ended Lucy, half defiantly and half apologetically, "won't hurt them none!"

"Well, they'll fast no longer," said Mrs. Murphy, wiping her reddened eyes.

At the end of the dance

FROM the ballroom floated the strains of a waltz, and from out beyond came the sleepy night-sounds—the late call of a bird, the faint whispering of leaves in the summer breeze.

The man watched the woman before him in the mellow glow of the lanterns, drinking in her loveliness with eyes that could not leave her face.

"What is it?" she asked softly. "You look as if you were in a dream."

"I think this is a dream, and you a dream woman," he answered; "for I never saw anyone so lovely! There is something that makes you stand entirely alone, in a delicate, glowing radiance. I think the greatest charm of all is your wonderful coloring."

The last notes of the waltz were quivering into silence. "That is the end," she said. "I think it is the beginning," he answered, still watching her.



"I think it is the beginning," he answered—

A Happy Last Touch

When you use the Pompeian Beauty Trio you can feel assured that your skin is always fresh and glowing, and that it will remain so almost indefinitely.

Pompeian Day Cream is a vanishing cream that is absorbed by the skin, protecting it from dust, wind and sun. The delicate film that remains on the surface after the Day Cream has disappeared holds powder and rouge so well that constant re-powdering is unnecessary.

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Use the Pompeian Trio together for Instant Beauty; for great care has been taken that all Pompeian Preparations blend perfectly.

Remember, first the Day Cream, next the Beauty Powder, then a touch of Bloom, and over all another light coating of the Powder.

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1. The 1923 Mary Pickford Pompeian Beauty Panel as described above. (Would cost from 50c to 75c in an art store.)
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The Girl Who Was Out of Date

By MME. JEANNETTE

Not long ago I had a call from a young friend. She came in wearily and sank into a chair. The brilliant afternoon sunlight fell full on her face, and I was appalled when I saw how pale she looked.

"What is the matter?" I asked, expecting to be told that she was ill.

"Oh, I'm just tired," she said; "so tired I don't care how I look."

I was so indignant that for a moment I could not speak. There is no possible excuse for such an attitude!

To make the best of herself is the conceded duty of every woman, young or old; and a modish gown means very little when her complexion is uncared for.

"Come here," I said to her, "and let me see what I can do for you."

First I used a vanishing cream, gently patting it into the skin. This was Pompeian Day Cream. I always use this, for it leaves only a faint creamy film on the surface and holds powder and rouge so well. Next a coating of the soft, clinging Beauty Powder. Then a bit of rouge blended downward and outward from the cheekbone; dusting over all with a last touch of the powder. And this I had done to only one side of her face!

I turned her around to face the mirror. You never saw anyone so surprised! She looked and looked, turning from side to side; and I don't wonder, for she saw two entirely different girls, and one was so much lovelier it seemed incredible.

"That is what you can make of yourself every day, and it will take only a few minutes," I told her.

I couldn't help laughing at her astonishment; she had never had an idea she could be so pretty. She realized now the mistake she had been making, and watched with the keenest interest, while I made the other side of her face just as charming, adding at the last a touch of Pompeian Lip Stick.

She didn't say very much, but all the afternoon I saw her eyes straying toward the mirror. I hoped then that she would profit by my little lesson, and I know now that she did, for I've never seen her looking pale and weary since.

Jeannette

Specialiste de Beauté

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Pleas shade powder sent unless you write another below.

What would you do in his place?

The steeplejack lights his pipe and goes on painting

Imagine, if you can, a steeplejack 487 feet above the street level. Hanging on by his teeth he is applying a more or less rough-and-ready coat of paint to a flag-pole.

Right in the midst of a busy morning's painting an adventurous bee buzzes into the picture. In fact, there are two bees, both buzzing viciously.

What should the steeplejack do?

There being in the profession no local rules for buzzing bees, your average steeplejack probably would get the all-clear signal from below and slide promptly down to safety.

But not Our Hero. He takes out his pipe, lights it, and goes on painting.

"It soothes the nerves," he says frankly about pipe smoking.

We have no way of knowing what kind of tobacco the steeplejack pours into his pipe on these bee-buzzing occasions, but we have a feeling that it is Edgeworth.

For Edgeworth does much to give the smoker a sense of calm, peaceful security.

Of course we wouldn't care to go on record as claiming that smoking a can of Edgeworth is as good as a two-weeks rest cure in the mountains; but we would like to register strongly the opinion that smoking any pipe makes life seem more worth living and that smoking a pipe filled with Edgeworth helps a lot.

If you are interested in finding out more about Edgeworth, the most sensible plan is for you to let Larus & Brother Company

send you some free samples so that you can try the tobacco for yourself.

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"Go upstairs with Lizzie-Kate and wash your eyes and lay off your bonnet, Lucy," added Mrs. Callahan, easily assuming command. "Take the baby with you and put him down on a bed—the child's dropping asleep. And you children run out into the yard and play until we call you! I'll pop the cream back into the freezer, and all we have to do is wash up a dish or two and heat the food——"

"Oh, but that's such a lot of trouble!" protested poor Lucy, clinging to the kindly hands even while Lizzie-Kate firmly drew her away. "Just bread and butter would do for the lot of them—and God knows you're angels to think of that——"

This was at about four o'clock, and it was quarter to six when Ellen Murphy came slowly through the side yard of her sister's home and stopped short, in a state of stupefaction at the scene in the kitchen.

The eager young Mullens, aided by Mart and Joe Kane and adoringly abetted by young Flurry, were having their faces wiped at the sink by four excited and interested women, preparatory to an orgy. They had played for two hours with the exhilaration of sensible children who know that every degree of increasing appetite represents an eventual deepening of delight.

Now the feast was spread; the big platter was loaded with chicken again, and the rolls and potatoes smoked appetizingly into the bright afternoon air, and there were jelly and nuts and celery and candies, and a cake that the Mullens would never forget, and a damp gunny sack over the freezer.

"For the love of St. Louise of Prussia!" said Ellen simply. Her mother's heart stood still; Lizzie-Kate paused, in the very act of tying on a big apron, and sent her sister a fearful glance.

"Hello, Lucy," said Ellen, with a kiss. "Hello, kids! Why didn't you bring the family, Lucy? Hello Mart! My God, are we going to eat again?"

She went up to her mother and managed the feat of encircling with her arm the little dried-up walnut of a woman, whose hands were filled with hot dinner plates.

"Mama, are you mad? I was awfully ashamed of those girls today," Ellen said bravely. "The gall of them—the airs of them—eating in a boarding house in Madison Avenue, and then coming down here to pick faults in your food! I'd

like to have told them what I thought of them—but you know how it is, mama—you can't, in your own house! I wanted to say 'the sole of my foot and the back of my hand to the whole crowd of you!' what with Mrs. Callahan coming down here and cookin' herself to death for them——"

Mrs. Murphy and Lizzie-Kate exchanged an innocent, wondering glance, their eyes wide with amazement and relief.

"I didn't mind it at all, dear," said Mrs. Murphy then, in a tone not often heard by Ellen nor any one of her children. "As long as yourself is the dear, good, appreciative child you are!" added the pessimist astonishingly.

And immediately, in a riot of laughter, they were all seating themselves at the table and fussing with re-folded napkins and buttering and jamming bread for the famished youngsters. And then came that rarely heard sound, the laughter of Mrs. Murphy.

"I didn't let on I seen nothing today at lunch——" she began.

"Oh, no you didn't!" said Ellen, in high feather. "All you did was to call them horses and camels!" And at this her mother's grizzled thin hair actually went down on the tablecloth in a spasm of mirth.

"Well, would anyone like Mart to go out and buy some tanbark or a few bath mittens for supper?" she sobbed joyfully. And there were shrieks.

"Sit back—and hold your horses—and have some manners to you!" said Lucy Mullen, in a sudden imperious voice. Her children slid the buttered bread from their obedient hands; even the curly-poled "old baby" shut her round black eyes.

"Will you say grace?" Lucy asked Mrs. Murphy.

The Murphys looked a trifle guilty. Lizzie-Kate indeed "blessed herself," and her food, at every meal. But for the rest of them this old country custom had somewhat lapsed.

But they were all silent now, and in the silence Mrs. Murphy's old pipe, still thinned with laughter, said reverently:

"Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord——"

And all the little Mullens, eying the gravy and the candy and the big maple nut marshmallow cake on the golden oak sideboard, said "Amen!"

As you read the next story by Kathleen Norris, in July COSMOPOLITAN, you will find laughs and lumps meeting each other in your throat

When Knighthood Was In Tower

(Continued from page 49)

nothing to be desired, but it appears that I lack that unusual imagination necessary to invent new and interesting plots. Perhaps that is because I have not seen enough of life in the raw—I have never actually experienced hunger, fear, envy; in fact, few, if any, of the standard emotions. There has been no necessity for me to feel them. My infernal wealth has been fatal to inspiration. Yet, by heaven, I can write, and some day I——"

"But with all your money, Mr. Tower," I

interrupt, "why not rent a theater and produce one of your own plays yourself, since all you really want is to see it on Broadway?"

"Yes, I could do that," he tells me, "but that is not my desire. I want my work accepted by a disinterested producer, on its merits!"

"Fair enough!" I says, foiling a yawn in my throat. "Isn't that waltz they're playing delightful?"

Well, money had not prevented Mr. Tower from solving the mysteries of



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dancing, and really he glided a wicked ballroom. While we're tripping the light fantastic, as they call it on Avenue A, I can't seem to keep my mind off this queer situation in which the millionaire Mr. Tower and the starving Mr. Westover play the leading parts. The thing interests me strangely, and having helped a chorus man and a prize fighter to solve similar problems, I can't see why I should be baffled by a couple of synthetic playwrights. Then in a flash the answer comes to me! I will have Mr. Tower buy “An Illegal Crime,” which will put Mr. Westover on his feet and give him a stake for coffee and cakes while he writes other gems. In turn, Mr. Tower through his influence can have Mr. Westover's play produced *under his own name* and in that way gather the fame he craves, because I'm satisfied “An Illegal Crime” will slap Broadway for a row of parsley!

I'm so excited over my idea that I talk of nothing else to Mr. Tower all the way home in his car—this time it's a Boles-Joyce limousine, carrying a crew of two on the front seat. When we reached my bower, I ran up and got my copy of “An Illegal Crime” and gave it to Mr. Tower to read, together with my proposition to think over. He was very doubtful and far from sold on the idea. In fact, he seemed much more interested in getting a rough estimate from me on when he could play around with me again. I said let's get his future all fixed up and we'd speak of recreation later. He then told me I was wonderful and I told him good night.

The very first thing the next morning Mr. Tower called me on the switchboard and he's the height of enthusiasm over both “An Illegal Crime” and the idea of buying it from Mr. Westover. Could I arrange a meeting? I said of course I could—and then it suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't yet mentioned a word of my scheme to Mr. Westover.

At first the highly astonished Robert couldn't see my proposition with a telescope and he most indignantly refused to have anything to do with it. What, allow his brain child to appear as the progeny of another? Never! He barked and meowed along these lines till I called his attention to the fact that he was broke, in debt, on the brink of being streeted from the St. Moe and had a six months' vacation in the hoosegow staring him in the face for not being able to pay his hotel bill. This made Robert thoughtful and he finally agreed with me that he who writes and makes it pay will live to write another play. He insisted, however, that he wouldn't take a nickel less than a thousand dollars for “An Illegal Crime.” When Mr. Tower offered him \$7500 cash for it Robert nearly swooned, but he recovered in time to gurggle “Sold!” Then the gambling millionaire starts the rounds with the play.

Well, where poor Robert Meacham Westover had to be content with interviewing office boys and having stenographers pass on his play when he was peddling it, Mr. Tower was ushered right in to see the big theatrical moguls themselves. There's only one place on earth where a man who is able to write a check for a million and get it cashed can't get attention and that place is called Nowhere. Sidney Rosenblum, the first producer Mr. Tower called on, looked greatly disappointed when the young money king

declined to put up the sugar to produce the play or even to go fifty-fifty on it. Still, out of respect to Mr. Tower's bankroll, Rosenblum glanced carelessly over “An Illegal Crime.” Mr. Tower told me afterwards that before Rosenblum had finished reading the first act he rang for his secretary and asked her to break out a contract!

Six weeks later the play was produced with Mr. Tower's name on it as author, and to the hysterical joy of Mr. Tower, me and Rosenblum, it turned out to be the success of the year. The critics went crazy and point-blank accused Mr. Tower of having wrote the great American play. Honest, he was interviewed silly and his picture was plastered all over the papers—in other words, he was famous and his lifelong ambition was realized.

Then along comes the fly in the ointment and the fly's name was Robert Meacham Westover, the real author of “An Illegal Crime.” When Robert sees what a knock-out his drama has turned out to be and realizes that he has sold all his rights in it, he's fit to be tied, no fooling! He made quite a scene at the switchboard, blaming me as all men since the first one blame the woman when anything goes wrong.

“I worked the best part of a year on that play,” he almost sobs to me. “I starved and slaved in composing it, and now, by heaven, I have to buy tickets to see my masterpiece, with another's name on it as its author! It's driving me insane!”

“Well, why didn't you think of that when you sold your frolic?” I says, but I'm really a bit upset myself. “You took seventy-five hundred dollars for it and Mr. Tower took all the chances. Suppose it had been a flop, would you have given him back his money?”

“I'll give him back his paltry seventy-five hundred *now!*” raves Robert. “Why, ‘An Illegal Crime’ will make that in royalties within a few weeks. I'll make him take back his gold and return my play! It's my greatest effort and I demand the fame and prestige it will give me and which is my right. Oh, whatever possessed me to enter into such an indecent, immoral bargain—to sell the child of my brain! I may never again compose such a plot. I'll have to start all over again. I—”

“Be still!” I butt in. “You got everybody in the lobby looking at you. As long as I started this, I'll try and finish it. I'll talk this over with Mr. Tower today. Remember, I promise nothing, but I'll do my best!”

“Straighten this out and you will never regret it,” says Robert frantically. “My career now rests in your pretty hands!”

Well, honestly, I was very sorry for Robert and the more I turned matters over in my troubled mind the more I began to see some justice in his stand. After all, it *was* his play that New York was wild over and it must have been horrible to have to see someone else get the credit. I hated myself for getting mixed up in his affairs at all, even though what I did was only done to help him. Then there was Mr. Tower's side to be considered, too. Hadn't he gambled his seventy-five hundred—just seven and a half times what Robert asked for “An Illegal Crime?” Mr. Tower had no way of knowing that the play would get over.

I just couldn't stand thinking about it any longer, so I went right to Mr. Tower and



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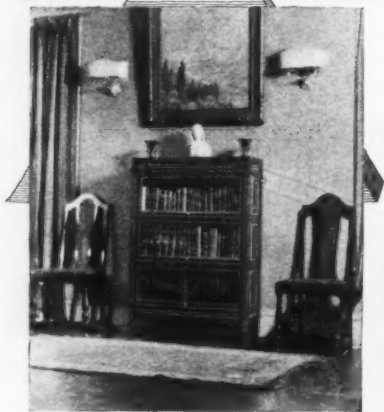
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presented the case of Robert Meacham Westover to him. Mr. Tower, joyful as a lark, was busy autographing his pictures, dictating letters to admirers, signing contracts for movie rights and Lord knows what else. He was busier than Busy himself, and sitting pretty, and I just hated to be a crape-hanger.

Mr. Tower was smiling happily when I began my story, after he had told his secretary to step out, but before I got half finished he was pacing the floor and the smile was conspicuous by its absence. To say it was a shock would be a niggardly use of adjectives! He never expected anything like this to gum up his fun.

"This is terrible—terrible!" he says finally. "I bought all rights to the infernal play from Westover, didn't I? Any court in the land will sustain my position. I'll give him all the royalties! I have no use for the money, I only want—"

"You only want the same thing Mister Westover wants," I interrupt. "That's credit for writing the play! There's no use offering him money either, Mr. Tower, I know he wouldn't accept it, and of course if he sued you and won, he'd get all the royalties anyhow. He could have me dragged to court for a witness—and I'd have to tell the truth, wouldn't I?"

Again Mr. Tower nervously patrols the room. "Well, what shall I do—what would you do?" he asks me desperately.

"Mr. Tower," I says seriously, "if you're a real man, a true knight, such as I like to think you are, here's the chance of a lifetime to show your bigness, and you'll jump at it! There's only one thing to do and that's the honorable thing. Take back your money from Mr. Westover and we'll both make an affidavit that he, not you, wrote 'An Illegal Crime'."

Mr. Tower gave me a long, long look and I returned it, putting everything I had in my eyes. "It will please you if I do this?" he asks me soulfully.

"Very much," I answered promptly. "And it should please you, too!"

With a deep sigh Mr. Tower became a knight. He called in his secretary and dictated a statement that caused the dumbfounded secretary's eyes to bulge. Then we got Mr. Westover, stopped at a notary public, and we all wrote our names on the dotted line. Mr. Westover signed with a flourish, but Mr. Tower's signature was shaky. Our next port of call was Sidney Rosenblum.

It goes without saying that Rosenblum was dazed when we had told him our little bedtime story, but he wasn't so dazed that he forgot to get his press agent busy on this new and sensational angle to the production of the play. There was little else in the newspapers the next morning, and, yes, my picture was there with the others. The thing burst like a bombshell on Broadway and the avalanche of publicity started "An Illegal Crime" on what has all the earmarks of a two-year run on the Big Street alone. Robert Meacham Westover was made for life, of course. Why, he and this Rosenblum have turned down \$80,000 for the movie rights! I could have entered the chorus of any musical show on Broadway as the

result of my photos being incessantly printed and the general notoriety I drew out of it, and even Mr. Tower got the best of the big exposure. He was highly praised for his sportsmanship in acting like he did, when he was legally entitled to claim authorship of the play.

Well, success brought about a great change in Robert Meacham Westover, the boy playwright. It went right to his head, where there was the most room. He moved from his cupboard under the roof to a classy suite in the most expensive part of the St. Moe and stalked through the lobby like he'd suddenly been appointed Duke of Diphtheria, or something. Instead of pestering me and the other girls about his imaginary phone calls as he did in days of yore, he now refused to talk to anybody over the phone.

However, he was grateful enough to me, who he swore put him over. He wanted me to go here and he wanted me to go there with him, but I couldn't use him and was ready and anxious to let him pass out of my life. Robert was too much in love with himself to really love anyone else, and when he asked me would I consider marrying him I told him I was afraid I couldn't get off duty to go to the church and they wouldn't stand for a wedding in the lobby.

"But I don't object to taking back the ten dollars I loaned you before you became the talk of New York," I says.

"Oh—I beg your pardon!" he stammers, getting red, and why shouldn't he? "I—I'd forgotten all about that—rushed to death—working on my new play, you know—that sort of thing—"

He pulls out a roll of bills that would strangle a hippo and makes a big display in the crowded lobby by thumbing them over a couple of times before counting me out a hundred dollars in ten-dollar bills. He let everybody see him handing me that money—and that's the tip-off on him.

I took one ten and coldly told him to keep the rest for writing materials. I haven't spoke two words to him since!

One more minute and I'm through, take off your coat and make yourself comfortable. Guy Austin Tower rushed up to the switchboard a few days later to excitedly announce that he'd been commissioned to write a play by no less than Sidney Rosenblum himself. Rosenblum had sent for Mr. Tower and told him he saw no good reason why the publicity he'd just enjoyed shouldn't be made use of. He then made Mr. Tower repeat all the circumstances connected with the authorship of "An Illegal Crime." When my boy friend got finished with the sad tale, Rosenblum puffed thoughtfully at his cigar for a minute or two and remarked that in his opinion the story of how Mr. Tower had bought Mr. Westover's drama and then given it back to him would make a corking play itself.

Well, with a plot at last to mix with his fine writing, Mr. Tower tied in enthusiastically and wrote the play.

It opened six months ago, and try to get in. The last I heard they were selling tickets for the New Year's matinee, 1924.

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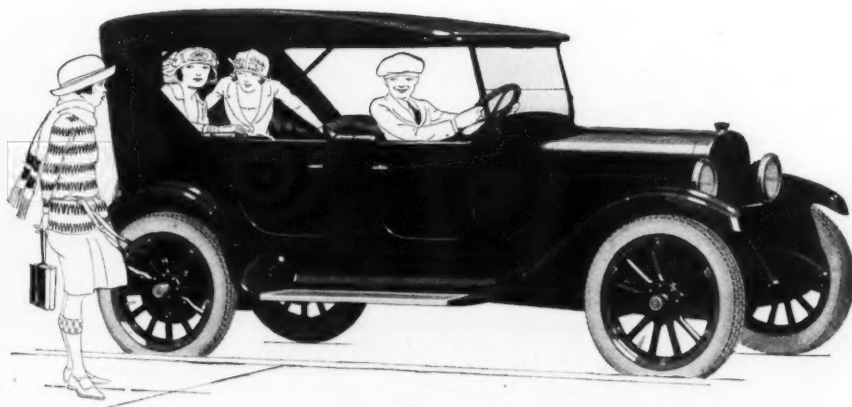
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Beaver!

(Continued from page 61)

Internally, he seethed. Day after tomorrow he would be returning to Princeton. Lord Dolicho had consented to stay another week—both the Rotary Club and the Elks were anxious to hear him. And all the past week seemed to William to have been exclusively composed of incidents like that of the eleven foot putt.

He didn't like the way Marcia sometimes looked at Lord Dolicho. He didn't like it at all. Mentally he characterized it as "an awful soft kind of a look."

Lord Dolicho's debonair accents aroused him from his walking stupor as they reached the porch of the Club.

"I say, let's play some sort of a silly game now, what?"

"How 'bout Drop the Handkerchief?" suggested William bitterly.

"Now Billy!" said Marcia in her most irritating voice.

"Ha, ha, not bad!" said the imperturbable Lord Dolicho. "Not bad!"

"What kind of a game?" asked Eloise respectfully.

"Oh, any sort of a silly one! Let me see. When I left home they were all playing Beaver, but that was ages ago. Good game, though."

"That's the one about people's beards, isn't it?" from Marcia, dubiously.

"Right-o. Good game. When you see a chap with any kind of a beard you cry 'Beaver!' at him and point, and if you spot him before the next lad it counts you one. A white beard's a Polar Beaver—five, that counts. And then if you run across a lad with a streaming red Vandyke he's supposed to be the Red King Beaver and you win the game. No end of fun. Couldn't play it much in London myself, though—family reasons," and Lord Dolicho chuckled.

The realization of that peer's connection with actual royalty descended upon William like a damp shroud. But he struggled on.

"I imagine it might be fun—in London," he remarked with heavy sarcasm. "But over here nearly everybody shaves."

"Oh, no they don't!" exclaimed Marcia excitedly. "Beaver! Polar Beaver!" She pointed.

A little gentleman with a meek white chin tuft scuttled away into the Club like a cheviot rabbit. Everybody but William laughed.

"Oh, jolly good for Marcia!" said Lord Dolicho approvingly. "Beaver!" he howled abruptly at the top of his lungs, arms waving.

The President of the Plasterers' and Plumbers' Bank, about to drive from the first tee, jumped, topped his ball and swore like a top sergeant. His bushy whiskers waved angrily in the breeze.

"Not quite a full grown Beaver," said Lord Dolicho calmly. "Have to chuck him back in the brook if he were a trout. But still, I think I score him."

The beaver hunt that followed occupied the rest of the afternoon. When, finally, they adjourned to Marcia's for tea, Lord Dolicho led Marcia by one hotly disputed hirsute tuft with Eloise a bad third and William a wretched fourth. One sprout of hope alone still waved like a sickly plant in the desert of William's disgust. He had



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engineered the recess for tea at Marcia's.

Marcia's father, Mr. Alexander Mather, was a testy old gentleman known behind his back as "The Czar"—by far the most important male citizen of Mastodon. And, next to his daughter and his honorary colonelcy on the Governor's Life Guards, his most cherished possession was his long, patriarchal beard of a luxuriant magnificence seldom seen in these razored days; an immense and snowy shrub still streaked with patches of bright auburn that showed whence Marcia had inherited her spectacular hair.

But William's half conceived plot received a staggering blow when they arrived at the Mathers'. Mrs. Mather remarked casually that she didn't know when Alexander would be home—he had a committee meeting of some sort. William sighed.

The minutes passed with Lord Dolicho and Marcia in low voiced converse on the sofa and William doing his best to overhear their conversation and at the same time make appropriately polite replies to Mrs. Mather's stream of questions about the Princeton curriculum. He began to hate Mrs. Mather. From time to time she observed the couple on the sofa with a wide, approving smile.

The butler was discussed but Lord Dolicho and Marcia agreed that mere sideburns should not count. The day lapsed into that dead, stale interval between tea and dinner when strong young men begin to think of marrying into the Follies. William, looking desolately out of the window to avoid having to look at Lord Dolicho and Marcia—Mrs. Mather had pumped him dry—stiffened suddenly, like a cat in the intoxicating presence of a catnip mouse. The disgraceful old runabout to which Alexander Mather still clung, with the stubborn affection of a child for its first rag doll, was wheezing up to the door.

William trembled with joy. He could not believe his eyes.

Mr. Mather got out gingerly. His expression as he turned to dismiss the chauffeur was not a happy one. In fact, William thought with enthusiasm, he looked mad enough to eat tacks. The meeting had obviously been a wayward one.

He stumped heavily up the front steps and Marcia heard him.

"That must be daddy!" she said; then, tenderly, to Lord Dolicho, "You know daddy, don't you, Fluffles?"

"Oh yes indeed!" said Lord Dolicho, beaming.

The steps stumped down the hall. The door was thrown open. Mr. Mather stood in the doorway, red and fuming. He had not bothered to remove his hat and one hand clutched the handle of a brief case as if it were an enemy's neck. He presented a figure of wrath at once unmistakable and portentous. His very beard seemed to bristle with passion and electricity. William gloated at him.

"Well! Of all the inordinate fools in the city of Mastodon," he began in a hoarse, harsh voice, "I think I have just been talking to the most pig-headed, venomous lot of—"

But the pithy conclusion of his sentence was never reached. Lord Dolicho had

leaped to his feet, upsetting one of Mrs. Mather's best teacups with a crash to the floor.

"Beaver!" he screamed, and pointed an accusing arm. "Beaver! Red King Beaver! I win the game!"

The pyrotechnics that followed were brief but gaudy. William, dissolved in hopeless laughter in a corner, viewed them with a satisfaction sweeter than honey. He heard Lord Dolicho's stammering apologies roared down and trampled upon. He saw that peer well-nigh driven out of the door by Mr. Mather's furious finger shaken in his face. He heard Mrs. Mather's ruffled "Impossible! Quite impossible! And I always thought he was such a nice young man!" He saw Marcia's hurt, dumfounded stare.

When Lord Dolicho was quite gone, William turned to Mrs. Mather.

"I think I'd better go after him," he said in tones of gentle apology. "After all—he's mother's guest."

"That's nice of you, Billy—and characteristic, too," said Mrs. Mather very pleasantly.

The hope that never dies in the breasts of social mothers aroused again. After all, in some ways, Marcia could hardly do better than Billy.

William took his departure very nicely, except for Marcia. She followed him to the door without saying anything, though her eyes were extremely bright. But when he offered his hand she put hers behind her back, and, "William Conduit, I'll never forgive you long as I live!" she said. Then the door slammed, leaving William gaping.

Still, going home, he smiled. She'd get over it. Women were always like that—but they always got over it, he thought experiencedly.

He found Lord Dolicho bundling things into his bags.

"I say—I find I can get a train at seven," Lord Dolicho remarked as soon as William came in. "Sorry about the lectures—I'll write and apologize. But I've just had an urgent telegram. Called back." His face was a mask.

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry!" said William insincerely. "About everything," he added.

"Did rather make an ass of myself, what? Sorry. A most perfect ass. Knocked over the apple cart for good and all."

"The Mathers are an awfully devoted family," said William treacherously. "If it weren't for that—" He sighed.

"Yes," said Lord Dolicho reflectively. "Quite."

He went on packing, finished the bag and locked it. Then he stared at William for a moment but seemed to find no comfort in his face. Then abruptly, astoundingly, he chuckled.

"All the same, the old sportsman is a most complete King Beaver!" he said. "Couldn't resist it. Well—" He began on the other bags.

William was just about to tiptoe away when the telephone rang.

"That Club, most likely—the Elks—telling me to bounce myself against a wall," said Lord Dolicho wryly. He picked up the receiver.

"Hello. Are you there?"

But the voice from the telephone was clearly not that of a club.

"Fluffles!" it said distinctly, and then there seemed to be a disturbance on the wires.

William should not have listened, doubtless, but he did. And as he listened he felt his heart slide down, down toward the pit of his stomach.

"Miss Mather! I say, Miss Mather! Marcia!"

"Oh Fluffles, I'm so glad you're there! I thought I'd never get to the phone. Oh Fluffles!" and the voice became inarticulate.

"I say!" said Lord Dolicho jerkily. "You know I apologize. Beastly of me. Acting the complete bouncer. I say, it was ghastly. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Oh Fluffles, of course! It's I who want to apologize all over myself for the awful, awful way that daddy behaved. Oh, I'm simply raging! I can't stand it! When you—" The voice choked.

"Marcia!" said Lord Dolicho in a strange voice, "Marcia darling, you're crying! Oh Marcia—"

William opened his mouth and shut it. The conversation went on. But he had heard enough.

He crept toward the door.

V

A MONTH later William, at breakfast, turned cautiously to the society column of his newspaper. Yes, there it was, in cold type, the finish of everything.

He glared at the little paragraph.

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mather of Mastodon announce the engagement of their daughter, Marcia, to Lord Henry Albert Edward Charles Eustace Dolicho of Park Lane and Whortleberry Towers, Hants-on-the-Wold, Buckmastershire, England. The wedding has been set for early spring, following which Lord Dolicho, who is a well known Egyptologist, will take his bride to Egypt for their honeymoon.

The headline was "American Society Beauty Nabs English Peer."

William let the paper flutter to the floor. His eyes stared into vacancy. Then, after a while, he began to feel a little better—for he was his mother's son. This hurt, but it would go by.

Still, it hurt. He picked up the paper and read the paragraph again. Then a certain memory of his mother returned to his mind. He attempted a feeble smile. After all, why not try it? He glanced around cautiously to make sure that he was not observed. But nobody else was paying any attention to him.

He propped the fatal journal against his coffee cup where he could stare at it intently but unobtrusively. Then he hesitated, but mastered himself.

"All a matter of what you think, Bill—just thought, that's all," he asserted.

He began gently to massage himself with the flat of his hand just above the region of his heart.

"Ça passe!" he whispered, "Ça passe! Oh, Marcia was grand while she had it—but ça passe—ça passe—passe—passe—"

Adela Rogers St. Johns knows the story of everybody in Hollywood: She tells one of these stories in July COSMOPOLITAN—the story we had promised for this issue





The enterprise and perseverance of Richard Arkwright, who gave the world the cotton spinning machine, enabled this man of humble origin to revolutionize a whole industry. Forced to carry on his work secretly at night, under fear of persecution and theft of his ideas, his tenacity of purpose carried him to ultimate success and lasting fame.

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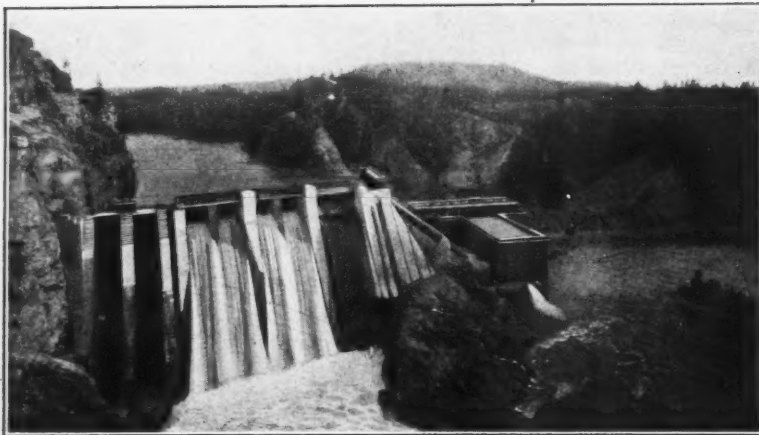
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Cosmopolitan for June, 1923

Red-Handed

(Continued from page 35)

then at once diminished in perspective.

"Any rough stuff?"

"Like takin' marbles from a kid. He had a gat on him, too—I got it here. The poor fish—carryin' his gat where he'd have to halfway undress himself to get it out. Scared stiff, scared dumb, too—mighty near it!"

"How much in it?"

"How would I know? All I know is I got it." Solitaire, between jolts and side slips, answered this with a seeming sharp impatience.

"What say I slow up and we give it a look?" Feary's eyes were on fire with greed. His coveting glance darted to the paper-wrapped cylinder in his companion's lap and at that the car buck-jumped out of the soft ruts.

Solitaire, in great apparent alarm, cried out:

"Look where you're goin'! Have you gone dippy, Pink? I don't know what we got and I ain't carin', neither—not till we're a couple hundred miles from here and hived up somewheres, safe. Think we've got the only fast car there is in this country? Just about now them suckers have quit runnin' round in circles and are shapin' to give us the race of our lives. You drive her—and you drive her like the devil!"

And Feary, seeing the force of this argument, drove her like the naughty word. In forty-five minutes the car ate up nearly thirty miles.

Now, in this respect, the trouble with Feary was his ignorance. As well as a man might who assiduously had studied local maps, he knew the route they meant to follow, its main roads and its crossroads, and its detour lines for avoiding the occasional small towns of this sparsely settled district. What he did not know was the physical configuration of the country or the natural characteristics which hereabouts marked changes in the terrain. Even at this speed at which they traveled a native-born would have been advised by certain things—by the increase of the salmon tint in the soil; by the thickening up of the underbrush, with briars and bays and gumberry bushes; by the water maples and holly and cypress and live oaks succeeding the pine barrens; by the recurrence of puddles filled with water that was the color of freshly steeped sassafras tea; and, most significant of all, by the appearance of stringy tufts of Spanish moss dangling like gray scalp locks in the clutches of the tree limbs. But Feary's experience had taught him that the transition from a flat to a bottom invariably was marked by a dropping-away in the earth.

So, since the road vanishing in the twist of a sharp angle just ahead of him seemed to continue straight on and on ahead upon a surface as level as the palm of your hand, he took the turn without checking speed. But the heated tires met soft gray mire and skidded, and the car spun around almost in its own length. A mud guard caught on a cypress knee so that the car reared up behind like a breachy colt.

The whirling blur passed from before Solitaire's eyes. He got on his feet,

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somewhat shaken but so far as he could tell not really hurt. A holly tree had broken his plunge; its prongs had scratched him, but the stiff foliage had saved his bones. He must have been flung right against the top of it. With one arm thrown up he had saved his face as he shot in among the barbed leaves and spiny twigs—he remembered doing that. Even in the shock and flurry of the smash-up he had not failed to hold fast to his burden. One set of fingers were gripped in the stout twine fastenings of it as he lifted himself up and recovered his hat from where it had fallen.

The car was alongside him. Its nose was half buried, right on the verges of the swamp; its rear wheels, though, still rested on the narrow strip of solid ground. But it would run no more for a while; an appraising glance at it told Solitaire that. A forward fender was stripped entirely away. Through its dished-in front the radiator was slobbering steam and hot water, and the back axle had knuckled and twisted out of all proper shape, where it had struck something solid and unresisting as the car came slap down after that violent back kick.

He circled behind the car. Feary lay on his face in a little pool of saffron water, his figure curiously foreshortened. One of his legs was twisted up under him in an unnatural crook and the trouser leg that covered it seemed strangely flabby. He might not be dead but he surely had a dead look about him. Certainly the leg was smashed. Probably the steering wheel had done that. Solitaire saw now that the steering wheel was bent forward on its stem as though a heavy body had been jammed with great violence against it; he had overlooked that detail in his first swift inventory of damage.

He put down the parcel, caught hold of Feary by the hollows under his arms and, without troubling to turn him over, dragged him through the soft ooze to a sizable cypress tree fifteen feet out in the edges of the swamp and left him, still face downward, behind the tree bole. Returning to the roadway, through muck halfway up to his legs, he observed with satisfaction that the intervening trunk almost completely hid the flattened body.

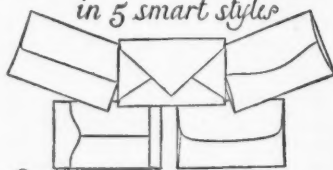
This admirably suited Solitaire. If Feary was dead he would rest there as well as anywhere. If he wasn't dead or dying, but only knocked cold, it merely was a question of time—of minutes, perhaps, hours possibly—before those who must be following, found him. Anyone who came upon the crippled car hunkered down halfway on and halfway off the strip of road would search about the spot, of course. Personally, he rather preferred Feary dead to Feary living; thereby things would be simplified.

To lighten his slimed feet he cleansed them as well as he could and with his precious package bestowed under his arm stood for a moment invoicing the prospect. Taking a short cut to one side or the other was not to be thought of. Either he would bog down, perhaps to founder and be smothered; or what was almost as serious a thing, he would get lost. So he must push ahead, across the slash, traversing a built-up dirt causeway that became of semi-liquid consistency in places where the seepage had come through its saturated walls. On ahead of him,

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some two hundred yards, he saw open water; a flimsy looking corduroy bridge spanned a slough. At no matter what risk, he must for a while stick to the highway, such as it was.

He started on, then halted and turned back, possessed suddenly of an idea. He took his own hat off his head and pitched it well out into the swamp to the left of the squatting car. It sailed prettily, struck flat and floated brim down. That was good. It was more than likely the pursuers would waste time there, probing for the hat's owner and for the money. Wearing Feary's hat, he went east, running hard and casting up with his feet sprays of yellow water.

As he ran, high thoughts possessed him. Thanks to chance and his late associate's recklessness he was on his own; he was playing the good old single-handed game again. Win or lose now, he would play it out so to the show-down.

And wasn't it a stake worth playing for?—a quarter of a million! There was the suggestion of an anticipatory caress in the way he hugged the small round firm burden to his breast as he splashed ahead. He had an almost overpowering desire to halt and tear away the wrappings, to open the container, to feast his eyes and favor his fingers with the sight and the touch of what was inside. He wanted to fondle it, tick it off in thousands and tens of thousands, stack it in sheaves on some handy stump. But he put the teasing thought from him. It was delectable, but also it was childish, foolish, dangerous, entirely out of the present question.

From the dizzied second when realization of the value of his prize came out of the sputterings of the man in overalls, Solitaire had designed to keep the whole lot for himself. Had the amount been within the scope of their original calculations—running up, say, to seventy or eighty thousand dollars—he would have kept the faith, breaking bulk fairly with the confederated pair of his helpers. But this purse was too big for splitting or sub-splitting. It should be for him and him alone, a suitable reward for the larger risks he had taken and for his wits in scenting the great chance back yonder at the very beginning.

Perhaps Solitaire's reactions were unique—I don't know. Perhaps his temptation was comparable to those which come sometimes to men calling themselves honest. I am no psychologist to say which it was.

Anyhow, he had meant, from the moment of that first overpowering revelation, to trick the two accomplices for their shares—to make away with Feary, if needs be, at some favorable period of their flight, then later, when opportunity and comparative leisure served, to eliminate the Kid from consideration, either by violence or threats of violence, possibly by craft, but somehow. The Kid had been the smallest of his worries. The Kid was timorous with the lily liver of a rabbit and the guts of a guinea pig; in this equation he represented the Least Common Divisor. Bare suggestion of a gun play would take the soul right out of him.

But now the combination of a mud slide and a cypress root had solved the more pressing part of the problem. Practically, Feary had been disposed of by his



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own act, saving mess and bother. The immediate concern was for Solitaire to save, intact, himself and the swag.

On all sides the outlook was lined with difficulties; apprehension began to ride even higher than his hopes rode. By now, the whole territory behind him must be up and humming. There would be policemen, constables, sheriffs and sheriffs' deputies on the move. There would be citizens organizing in groups as volunteer vigilantes, or trailing as solitary huntsmen. If he succeeded in eluding the domestic possemen, there would be private detectives—Burns men and Pinkertons—hurrying down from the North as fast as the steam cars could fetch them. And here he was afoot, on his own slender resources, and a stranger to these parts, using an accent foreign to the customary forms of speech, a figure fit for the scrutiny of every native eye.

He had set foot upon the sagging corduroys at the passage of the slough when the hope of deliverance budded in his mind to definite form. What quickened his brain to a shaped purpose was a thing he just now heard. Ahead of him, as yet out of sight but clearly audible, something—men or cattle or possibly men on horseback—made splashing, floundering sounds in the slushy underfooting. He caught no note suggestive of tires or wagon gear jangling; but the *slog-slog* of soggy feet was plain enough; not far off, either, and drawing nearer.

In their well devised course he and Feary neither had met nor had overtaken any others. They had passed, at a distance, some darky cabins and that was all; the section over which they had come was one of poor lands and of few and scattered houses. But here, in this whereabouts, walled in by quagmires and by dense hedges of poisonous looking greenery, he was about to encounter these oncoming travelers. The travelers, whoever they were, conceivably might not suspect him, but assuredly they would mark him for an alien. Inevitably, the townspeople, outpaced thus far but no doubt coming up hot-clip, would ask questions of all and sundry along the way, especially with the clue of the wrecked automobile to warm the chase for them.

But the pursuers would look for a man reported to be armed and presumably desperate, a man dressed after a certain fashion and answering to a given description, and, moreover, one literally quilted with stolen moneys in a vast amount. What if such a man, thus distinguished, should vanish altogether and in his stead there went forward one who was ragged and penniless and in all seeming respects a harmless wayfarer? What if this transformed lo'terer very shortly, at a point somewhat distant from these present surroundings, so maneuvered as to get himself bestowed in a retreat where the searchers would seek last of all, if at all, for a driven fugitive known to be enormously in funds?

The project, whole and complete, spurred into his mind in that same flash when the sound of approaching steps came to his sharpened ears. In no time at all he was out, thigh-deep in the swamp, and had wedged himself in under the bridge logs, close against the sodden, quaky bank. A minute or two later two mounted men clattered over his head,

speaking of trivial personal matters in their drawled vernacular.

A little farther along the sight of an abandoned car bedded down across their path, like a brood sow, sent them hurrying forward. So they did not see the blocky figure, unencumbered excepting by its dripping wet garments, that immediately thereafter emerged from hiding and regained the made ground and ran swiftly off, heading for the higher places lying to the east and south of the drowned lands.

With Solitaire haste was the essence of the contract he had made with himself. With as little delay as possible he counted on snugging himself in where, by his estimations, he would be safest from the chances of detection. Lying doggo in his cell in some remote and rural hoosegow he could, by means of newspapers and lock-up gossip, keep track of the vain hue and cry until it ran its abating course. Without bringing suspicion upon himself he could follow the fortunes of his late associates. He would know whether Feary lived or had died, whether the Sweet Caps Kid had been apprehended as an accessory before the fact. If, in spite of all, they found him there, if they recognized him for the Tuckahominy hold-up, he still would have a potent weapon in reserve for his own defense. Through the bars he could traffic with them; a prisoner, he yet could bargain practically on his own terms. For he alone could lead them back to the treasure with which he had levanted. It would be his freedom against so much cold cash. Money talks and in his behalf a quarter of a million would argue with an eloquent separate tongue for every one of its quarter of a million units.

Solitaire figured on getting a matter of thirty days or so in a convenient county jail. His mistake was that he did not know the custom of the neighborhood. What he got was ninety days on a county chain gang—a vastly different thing.

Where the swamp petered out, first to half flooded islands set in reedy and weedy waters, and then to solid earth, he struck across fields and woodlots. He slept, supperless, that night in a thicket. In the morning at daylight, on the edge of a patch of young sweet corn, he stripped a scarecrow's frame of a terribly faded, terribly weather-beaten coat. Under a brush pile he hid the coat which he had worn in his rôle as an itinerant steam fitter looking for odd jobs; that was the part he had played coming into the State. With the coat he left the two pistols—his own automatic and the overalled man's cheap gun—and all other things which by any contingency might serve to identify him in his proper person. He carried the scarecrow's bleached and ragged vestment on his arm as he went along on his way.

Luck continued to serve him. Two miles farther on he came upon a cabin, standing in a small clearing. Watching from a fence row, he saw a negro woman stretch a plow rope between the pole of a martin box and the trunk of a chinaberry tree and drape thereon a meager string of newly rinsed garments which she took from a tub in the doorway. Then she balanced a heavy basket of garden truck on her head and went singing along a grass lane into the woods. He waited until he made sure that, with this negress gone,

the cabin was quite empty. He took from the line a damp cotton jumper, ragged at the elbows, and from the house a pair of broken brogans and an ancient cap. On a kitchen table in the one room stood a tin plate containing pones of stale corn bread and some slivers of side meat, glazed over with cold grease. He breakfasted swiftly on these scraps. Safely back again beyond the brush fence he made more changes in his wardrobe. He now was satisfied with his appearance; it ought to deceive anybody.

He knew that not far to the east of him must run the railroad. He came upon it, at a siding where a south bound freight waited for a passenger train to pass. When the passenger train went by and the freight shuffled back on to the main line Solitaire went with her, curled up in a far corner of an empty box car. Fifteen miles below, the free passenger dropped off when a halt was made at a fair-sized town, a county seat by the looks of it.

An aproned individual who, by the looks of him, was a solid citizen, stood at the door of what apparently was his own retail grocery establishment at a corner of the street running parallel with the tracks. With his sockless feet dragging in the pillered shoes that were too big for him, Solitaire limped up to this person, beginning his plea for alms in the studied whine of the professional panhandler.

The business man shook his head.

"Better get out of here while you can," he said, in a soft and almost a gentle tone. "This ain't the best town in the state for tramps. And you make the second one I've seen already this mawnin'."

It was the cue Solitaire desired. He cursed the citizen vilely. He called him a certain name—a name often used in debate elsewhere but not as yet popular for common usage in the cotton belt. There it is still the primest fighting word of all the fighting words.

With a promptness of gesture which did not match in with his air of being a sober burgher nor yet with his lazy speaking voice, the grocer flung his right hand back under his apron skirt. For Solitaire, realism was being carried too far. He had calculated, by his insolence, to bring on a wordy encounter, no more. But what sort of a country was this where side street retailers carried gats in the daytime and craved excuse to use them?

Solitaire ran, ducking low as he turned the corner. Half a block along he ran into the arms of a coatless man in a uniform cap with a large silver badge pinned to his shirt.

It seemed that in the squatty city hall the city judge sat, awaiting any possible court business. Solitaire, being arraigned, gave a name and the frightfully indignant merchant and the city marshal gave testimony.

"Hum," said His Honor. "The big cities, seems like, are tryin' to unload all their tough hoboes on us folks down here—gettin' to be worse than the boll weevil. Let's see, now—vagrancy, beggin', usin' profane and insultin' language, disaw'dly conduct—say, I reckon it's just about time some of you bums from up Nawth had a lesson."

Solitaire grinned. Calling him a bum—him who could buy and sell this dump of a city hall and its police judge five times over and still have a couple of hundred

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Are you making the most of your hair? Here are six pictures of the same girl showing her hair dressed in six different ways. Notice how the various arrangements change her appearance.

The way you dress your hair and the way you care for it, means the difference between looking attractive or just ordinary.

Why you *must* have beautiful well-kept hair—to be attractive

WEAR your hair becomingly, always have it beautifully clean and well-kept, and it will add more than anything else to your attractiveness and charm.

Wherever you go your hair is noticed most critically.

People judge you by its appearance.

It tells the world what you are.

Beautiful hair is not a matter of luck, it is simply a matter of care.

You, too, can have beautiful hair if you care for it properly.

In caring for the hair, proper shampooing is always the most important thing.

It is the shampooing which brings out all the real life and lustre, the natural wave and color, and makes your hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps. The free alkali in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why discriminating women, everywhere, now use Mulsified coconut oil shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure, and it does not dry the scalp or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

When oily, dry or dull

If your hair is too oily, or too dry; if it is dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy; if the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch; or if it is full of dandruff, it is all due to improper shampooing.

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Cocoanut Oil Shampoo



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You will be delighted to see how easy it is to keep your hair looking beautiful, when you use Mulsified coconut oil shampoo.

The quick, easy way

Two or three teaspoonfuls of Mulsified in a cup or glass with a little warm water is sufficient to cleanse the hair and scalp thoroughly.

Simply pour the Mulsified evenly over the hair and rub it in. It makes an abundance of rich, creamy lather, which rinses out quickly and easily, removing every particle of dust, dirt, dandruff and excess oil—the chief causes of all hair troubles.

After a Mulsified shampoo you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it really is. It keeps the scalp soft and healthy, the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh-looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage.

You can get Mulsified at any drug store or toilet goods counter, anywhere in the world. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.

*Splendid for Children—
Fine for Men*





*Palm and olive oils—
nothing else—give
nature's green color
to Palmolive Soap.*



She looks as young as ever

How often one hears this said of some woman whom the passing years seem to leave untouched. She rivals her daughters in freshness, and other women marvel.

Keep that schoolgirl complexion—this is the secret, and every woman should share it. Don't let the years write their record on your face when care will prevent it.

Begin today the beautifying that will help renew youth and charm. It will put natural color in your cheeks and make your face look firm and young.

Simple, but effective

This restorative treatment may seem almost too simple, but it is based upon real skin hygiene.

Dirt, oil and perspiration accumulate and must be removed. Otherwise the pores enlarge and blackheads and blotches result.

Wash your face daily with pure soap and you needn't fear complexion troubles. Your skin will remain firm, with a smooth, satiny texture which makes maturity as attractive as early youth.

All soaps won't do this

This mild cleansing is the most effective of

all skin treatments, but you mustn't be careless about soap. Facial soap must be mild, soothing while it cleanses. It must be lotion-like, with no harshness. Such a soap is Palmolive, blended from palm and olive oils. They are nature's cleansers, valued since the days of ancient Egypt.

Apply the creamy lather freely, massaging it thoroughly into the skin. Rinse thoroughly and dry gently with a soft towel.

Bedtime is best for cosmetic cleansing, that your skin may be renewed and refreshed while you sleep. In the morning rinse with cold water and then look in the mirror. Your reflection will delight you by its radiant freshness and charm.

Luxury soap for 10c

You are mistaken if you imagine that Palmolive must be a very expensive soap because of its rare costly ingredients.

Palmolive factories work day and night, thus lowering cost. If made in small quantities Palmolive would cost at least 25c a cake. It is yours at 10c.

Use Palmolive on the wash stand and for bathing.

*Volume
and Efficiency
Produce
25c Quality for*

10c



thousands left! Besides, this scheme of his was progressing so beautifully! He just had to grin. But his honor on the bench did not see the joke.

"Think maybe it's funny, huh?" he commented acidly. "I'll learn you to laugh—three months' hard labor. Any other cases, chief? If not, court's adjourned."

Evidently justice hereabouts moved speedily. Solitaire ate his midday meal, such as it was, at a place called a county farm. Already he was encased in a shapeless two-piece rig of broad striped black and white and on his legs were noisy hobbles. Most of the convicts at the farm were "single shackled"—a ring fast on the left ankle and a long chain with a loose end which might be looped up about the waist. But for some reason or other, perhaps because he was a city product, so Solitaire subsequently decided, the blacksmith who served as deputy keeper chose to double shackle Solitaire, with a ring for either ankle, one riveted on him and the other locked on, and an eighteen-inch length of clanking ironmongery to join them.

He stayed at the farm less than two hours. That same afternoon, with two other newly sentenced offenders, he was taken in a wagon to a camp, so called, in the lowermost edge of the county, a dismal empty place of tidal creeks and sand banks, and was entered there as a member of a road gang. Part of the time the gang repaired roads over which scarcely anyone traveled. Mostly, though, they spaded out canals and laterals for the reclaiming of some salt water meadows, digging and wheelbarrowing and stacking from sun-up until dark under the eyes of warders who were so singularly alike that it seemed they must have come, finished and set-up, from the same mold—three lanky, sundried men with prominent noses and unprominent chins and languid malarial eyes, who carried sawed-off shotguns and heavy canes and seemed to dislike all things except authority and chewing tobacco.

At night Solitaire slept—if the mosquitoes, which took on at dusk when the sand flies left off, would let him sleep—as one of a double row who lay on fouled blankets upon straw, with their heads lined close up under the side walls of their canvas shelter and their feet edging an aisle down the middle; each one of them being threaded on by a link of his own private chain to a longer and heavier chain which stretched the length of the tent. He was fed on corn bread and salt pork and blackstrap molasses and a brackish fluid which passed for coffee. Six days a week, while his cumbered shank bones ached continuously to the weights upon them, and the winged vermin stung him and bit him and hummed at him, and the semi-tropical sun cooked him, he shoveled stinky black mud or else fine hot white sand. Sundays were the days of rest. He spent his Sundays beneath the tent with his bondmates, all of them tethered together as though for the night watch, like so many uneasy living charms strung on a giant's bangle; and the guards sat under a fly and played seven-up.

Ninety days Solitaire did thus and so, and all that time the irons were never loosed off from his legs. He toiled until he was spent from heat and exhaustion and insects' poison. He got a touch of coastal fever from the uncongenial climate and was cured of it by his toil. In his filthy motley he looked rather like a gross and unwholesome worm, or rather more like the piebald larva of some vast worm, and he lived the life of a worm. In all his ninety days on the gang he saw no newspaper, nor heard one single informing word from any source of what went on in the world beyond his resident marsh. He might as well have been dead. Often he almost wished he were dead.

It was along about the beginning of May when Solitaire first penetrated the inland swamp where Feary smashed up his car for him. It was early in July when he returned to it, walking with a peculiar spraddle-legged gait which had become his enforced habit. The swamp thatch along the margins was jungle-thick by now and the slough was shrunken up and all its surface was scummy from stagnation; instead of standing inches above water level the causeway stood a good yard above it. As soon as he was in sight of the crossing he broke into a shambling run, scuffling his feet over the earth. It would be a good long time before he accustomed himself to the fact that he could take a long and a free step. Now, for all his haste, his stride measured just eighteen inches.

In a fierce fever of hurry he splashed down off the roadbed and, stooping, pushed under the corduroy bridge and felt in a little recess in the spongy soil. His heart gave a big jump in him when the probing fingers met a solid cylindrical object. Through his captivity he had been tormented by profound misgivings touching on this hiding place for his treasure. He had thoughts of the possibility of a freshet swelling the slough and washing the bank away, or a hog rooting the cache out; of the chance that repairing the bridge, say, some human visitor had happened upon it. But here it was, identically where he had left it and surely all whole and tight. The wrappings about it were molded and stained but still quite intact.

He could not wait another minute. This was the moment he had been picturing since the end of spring. He must have a look at what was inside—must tally it, bill by bill, and count it in multiples and check and re-check the noble total of it. Squeezing the package in both affectionate hands, he scrambled out from under the logs and on a dry place behind a clump of young water maples he squatted down, got a cheap new knife out of his pocket and cut the mildewed strings. The paper, glued by the dampness to what it enclosed, stuck tightly. He set the thing on end, ripped away a segment of the adhering cover from the top and seeing then that the container was of tin, sealed and soldered fast, with a grunt of eagerness he drove the knife-blade down through the thin metal and wrenched sideways to make the cut larger. He bent

the edges of the opening down and in.

A smear of bright red instantly appeared upon the hand that gripped the can to hold it upright. He must have gashed himself—no, he hadn't either. The sticky red stuff wasn't blood; it hadn't come from him. It had come from the triangular rip in the tin top. More of it was coming, oozing out under jostling and pressure and bringing with it an oily, pungent, familiar smell.

He stood up, turning the can downward and away from him, and with a small bubbling sound a slender stream of the thick red liquid spurted forth, coating his hands and splattering his legs and his old shoes, and making a little red pool at his feet. It continued to run out until he knew the receptacle must be about empty. To make sure, he shook it and the answer from within was a very faint splash and gurgle. He felt empty, too. There was an all-gone sensation at the pit of his stomach as though he had eaten no breakfast that morning, as though his disappointment had translated itself into a hunger pang.

Immediately, though, he pulled himself together, readjusting. Solitaire had a certain rough philosophy in him. Those have to be philosophers of a sort who live by the chancy trade he followed.

"Devil of a country!" he said aloud. "I'll say it's a devil of a country where even a rube goin' home to paint up his hen house or his back stoop or somethin' has to pack a gat on his flank."

He shook his head in puzzlement. It was as if this shook a new thought loose in his mind. Addressing himself, he spoke on: "But say, look here now, that guy told me, well as he could for stutlerin', that it was the big money he was carryin'. Yes, and didn't I ast him twice't to make sure, and didn't he try to say 'Yes' plain as a guy could that was past talkin'? That guy was too skeered to try to lie to me. What the . . ."

With a dripping red finger he shucked away the torn paper altogether and, turning the can over, found pasted on the under side of it a printed label.

"So that's the answer to the little riddle," he said, almost casually. "Well, darn a stutlerin' guy anyways!"

He tossed the smeary thing from him and shamled briskly away. He stopped once to stoop down and rub the scars on his irked ankles, then went on without a backward glance.

The can rested on a tussock of rank swamp grass, its branded side looking up to the hot sun so that the lettering on the label stood out in clear relief.

It read as follows:

ACME READY MIXED PAINT COMPANY

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ONE QUART OF VERMILION

Those to whom a masterly story is one of the joys of life will eagerly await Irvin Cobb's story in COSMOPOLITAN for July—on sale June tenth



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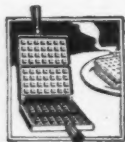
BECAUSE it cooks *three things at the same time*, the Armstrong Table Stove offers a really practical way of preparing any meal right at the table.

You can cook above, between and beneath the double heating unit, all at the same time. For breakfast, fry eggs in the aluminum pan on top, bread in the toaster which fits between, and browns, without warping, on both sides at once, and grill bacon in the deep aluminum pan below.

The Armstrong Table Stove is a pleasure to own because its gleaming white enamel does not tarnish by the heat. The sparkless tilting plug makes heat control simple and easy, for it lifts off—no tugging or pulling.

Ask to see an Armstrong Table Stove—in the distinctive square shape—at your electrical or hardware dealer's. Price \$12.50 with aluminum toaster, deep broiling pan, griddle, four egg cups and rack. Write for our folder, "A Week of Menus," which contains suggestions for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and late supper for seven days.

THE ARMSTRONG MANUFACTURING CO.
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A cast aluminum waffle iron which needs no greasing may be purchased separately for \$4.00. It fits into the toaster compartment and makes beautiful, crisp waffles, browned on both sides at once.

ARMSTRONG TABLE STOVE
Cooks 3 things at once
Makes Waffles Too!

graced a virtuous lady of a sudden turned so venturesome as to call on a man in his lodgings alone. Almost anybody else it would surely have taken in; even Lanyard found himself for a moment at loss to account for this revolutionary innovation, a change of rôle made the more confounding by the fact that Liane had gone to the length of dressing it with garments of a semi-négligé sort whose circumspection was hardly akin to the spirit that sported them.

But one glimpse of Lanyard's eyes, one flash of their reclaimed intelligence, served to make plain the poverty of objective artifice as an aid to Liane's intentions. It indeed did more; it struck pale glints of panic from her own eyes, or something very like it in the sight of one who knew as yet no reason why it should discountenance the woman to find him, whom she had sought of her own accord, awake and in his proper mind.

She held a dead wait with a hand on the door knob behind her, dusky eyes quick in a face that wanted a shade or so of its habitually high illumination, lips a trace apart as if with a cry unsounded.

But the pause imposed by her illegible emotion was brief of life; with her next breath Liane recollected herself and, uttering a low sound of compassion, crossed the room to kneel by the head of the berth.

"No, no, my friend!" She spoke in French, her arms lightly forced back to the pillow the shoulders which Lanyard was lifting. "Rest tranquil—with that poor head! Thou dost still suffer greatly, my old one?"

Lanyard mumbled a dashed negative with lips that were muffled, before he could object, by lips ardent and tender, whose clinging intimacy he escaped at length only by moving his head aside.

Happily, that movement excited only a mumble of pain, entirely bearable; he was able to muster a smile by way of redressing the rebuff. "I say!" he remonstrated in his most British English, "we are getting on, rather—aren't we?"

The woman drew back sharply and, half kneeling, half resting on her heels, showed a face sad with reproach. "Hast thou forgotten, then?"

"More than I guessed, going on this bit of business, my dear." Lanyard was firm in his stand against French; it was easier to be unsentimental in sound Anglo-Saxon. "What bothers me most is this," he proceeded in querulous vein, a self-conscious smile accounting for his neglect of the stricken eyes staring into his: "I've remembered and forgotten much too much all at once. It's very discouraging—you may be interested to know—to wake up from what amounted to a sound long nap and find that seven perfectly useful months have been stolen while one slept."

"It is true, then, what I feared!" "Afraid it is, Liane, if what you feared was that a blow on the head had bumped my right mind back to its throne."

Slowly and with a bitter smile the woman repeated the English phrase, "A blow on the head!"

"That's what did the trick, and I don't mind telling you it hurt like the devil."

"But what of the blow to my heart?"

The Lone Wolf Returns

(Continued from page 94)

Her closed hand smote Liane's breast. "You complain with reason of having been robbed of seven months of memory; but what of me, who stand to lose seven months of memories?"

"Pardon?" Lanyard queried, politely dense.

"You loved me well in that time while you were your old, true self."

"Loved you, Liane? And forgot! Ah, no! you ask me to believe too much."

"You jest—and my heart is breaking."

"It's no joke to forget an experience like that, something which one man in a million would be lucky to know once in his life."

"One in a million!"

"I beg your pardon; I was counting in your unsuccessful lovers as well."

"But this is too much!"

With an abrupt movement the woman started up, to pause with face averted and hands fast laced. As promptly Lanyard tumbled out of the berth.

"Forgive me, Liane," he said contritely. "I dare say I am a bit light-headed; it would be surprising if I weren't, considering that I've experienced something of a shock today, and not by any means a physical shock merely—and am still shaken from it. You can hardly demand rational behavior of a revenant lately spewed back into life by a psychic earthquake. That it was a strictly private earthquake doesn't make its after effects any the less unsettling."

"True; it is you rather who have me to forgive." With a spontaneous generosity that shamed him, Liane swung back to Lanyard and caught both his hands to her bosom. "In my sadness and pain I forget you cannot understand . . ."

"Then make me understand. I've no one else to look to—and it would be unkindness to leave me in the dark."

"But give me time to consider . . ."

She let go his hands and sank into the room's one chair. "It's going to hurt me to tell you, Michael, even more than it will hurt you."

"And how is that?"

"Because, I think . . ." She studied him awhile with a troubled gaze . . . "I think you have gone back to the ways of thought that were yours seven months ago."

"And what is so deplorable in that? Ways of thought about what?"

The woman leaned forward to bend her head to his in confidence, but gave a slight start instead and drew back with a veering glance as if disturbed by some noise unheard by Lanyard, then laid a finger to her lips, sprang up lightly and went to the port to look out. From this, in agreeable disappointment, she crossed back to the door, inclining to it an attentive ear for some seconds before opening it furtively to peer out, and concluding the performance with an expression of alarms allayed.

"I was mistaken," she announced, shooting the bolt, "there is nobody."

"Madame la Comtesse was expecting—"

She gave her head a shake of irritation excited by his levity, and without warning whipped from the folds of her négligé an automatic pistol, which she pressed into Lanyard's hand regardless of his efforts to refuse it.

"No, take it—take it, I say, while there is time."

"But what the deuce!"

"Take it, I tell you—you may need it soon." And then as Lanyard humored her for the sake of peace, she proceeded with every appearance of offering a complete explanation: "That dolt of a doctor told me you were unarmed."

"Bright? But how does he know? And why should he care?"

"Your effects were searched this morning while you were at breakfast, and the steward who picked you up after your fall took the trouble to find out that you had no weapon about you."

"Thoughtful of all hands, I'm sure!" Lanyard murmured in amazement. "But do tell me what I have done to deserve so much respect?"

"Presently," Liane promised in a hushed voice. She moved nearer and held out an open hand. "No," she insisted, and brusquely brushed aside the pistol when he tried to return it, "the necklace! Give me that now—we can come to explanations later. Let me hide it away before they come to put you under arrest—they may, at any moment."

"Indeed?" Impatience with all this, as it seemed, determined effort to mystify him to no end, resulted in the pistol's being flung into the berth, and peremptory imprisonment of the woman's wrists. "Now!" Lanyard demanded, "come to your senses, Liane, be intelligible if you can. Why should I be in danger of arrest? What is this necklace you are raving about?"

"Give it to me first—"

"I know nothing of any necklace."

"You have forgotten; nevertheless, you have it. You told me you would never let it leave your person, you must have it hidden somewhere about you now. Find and give it to me before it is too late."

Her agitation was too truly rendered to seem put on for a purpose; and though he had not the least inkling of its cause, Lanyard reflected that in those seven months anything might have happened, the amplest reason might all too possibly exist for the distress of mind which Liane was so vividly portraying. Half persuaded, he released her wrists and, stepping back, ran the hands of old cunning through his garments, locating every spot which in former days he had been accustomed to use as a temporary cache for purloined property—and drawing every one blank. Winding up with a shrug of fatigued incredulity: "There is nothing," he declared shortly. "Now be so kind—"

"Nothing!" Consternation rang in that guarded cry. "They must have it already, then, they must have searched you and found it while you slept! The doctor spoke of having given you a sleeping powder—enough, he said, to keep you quiet till morning."

"I didn't take it."

"They must have thought you had, or you wouldn't have been left unwatched, I would have found it impossible to see you. You have been asleep?" Lanyard nodded. "You have slept all afternoon, and soundly?" He confessed that he had. Liane subsided, crushed by despair, upon the cushioned transom beneath the port. "It was the same to them as if you had taken their drug—the opportunity they needed. Now they have found the necklace—you are lost!"



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"But I have often been 'lost' in my life," Lanyard retorted, unmoved more than by impatience with this everlasting beating about the bush. "And at present I feel less lost than quite newly found, and so prefer to think myself—until, at least, you consent to become more coherent."

Beneath the sheer silk perfect shoulders stirred disconsolately. "There is nothing one can do now—one can only wait."

"Let me recommend you to study myself, then—to my mind, a perfect pattern of patience."

Lanyard offered the cigarettes in an unfamiliar case he had found in his pockets, and when they were disdained philosophically helped himself, while the woman sat glowering at the door as if to wither the object of her spite, wherever he might lurk beyond those walls.

"That animal of a doctor! How dare he be so sly with me and at the same time such an imbecile!"

"Oh, very well!" said Lanyard, settling into the chair. "By all means let us begin with that good Doctor Bright. What has he done?"

"He came to me an hour ago, Michael, to put me on my guard against you."

"Considerate beggar. But do go on."

"The idiot would like to make love to me. He thought he might worm into my good graces by warning me to keep an eye on my jewels, since it has transpired that you were the Lone Wolf."

"And since when has it transpired?"

"He told me that the captain had been advised by wireless, early this morning, to keep you under observation until we arrive at Nassau, where officers will board the vessel with a warrant for your arrest."

"Something to do with the missing necklace, of course."

"You're wanted in New York for stealing it. Your last great coup, my friend—and you bungled it."

"I did? Then I trust devoutly you are right, it was my last. From what you hint, Liane, I would seem to have been leading a busy life of late. If you would only be a little less vague . . ."

"If I hesitate to speak plainly," the woman reminded him gently, "it is because you are dear to me, Michael; I find it not easy to say anything that will give you pain."

"Console yourself by observing that I am prepared. You have told me so much already, a word here and a hint there, I could almost foretell this revelation you shrink from making." Lanyard shot a quizzical grin through the cigarette smoke.

"I am accused of stealing a valuable necklace and making such an unworkmanlike job of it that I had to fly the States incognito. It would further appear that I wasn't very clever about making my escape, since my presence aboard this vessel is known and steps have been taken by the authorities to have me detained at her first port of call. For all of which, I presume, I have to thank that persevering hater of mine—and friend of yours—Morphew. What a memory the man must have! what a genius for bearing a grudge!"

"All that is good guesswork and substantially true"—the woman nodded regretfully—"all but your suspicions of Morphew. There you are wrong; he had nothing to do with this affair, Michael, it is all of your own contriving."

"You tell me that," Lanyard laughed, "and in the same breath that I am 'dear' to you! It's no good; Liane, you can't be Morphew's friend and mine."

"I tell you nothing but what of a certainty and my own knowledge I know. Morphew is nothing to me, you are everything; notwithstanding, your suspicions do him an injustice—he would have saved you in New York had you permitted. But you wouldn't listen to me when I prayed you to accept his offer of intervention . . ."

"That at least one finds easy to believe."

"And even now he would be your friend—yours as well as mine—if you would consent. Morphew stands prepared to save you yet, if we can find a way to slip through their fingers who await you at Nassau."

"But tell me how . . ."

"The very last thing before we sailed, Morphew sent Pagan to promise me, if I, could persuade you to go ashore at Nassau and apply to his factors there, the agents who have charge of his bootlegging depot in the Bahamas, he would have us both conveyed secretly to France, in his own yacht."

"Truly?" Lanyard laughed again, flipped his cigarette through the port and sat up. "How charming of the man—but how strange! Who would ever suspect that rude and unlovely exterior disguised so much goodness and simplicity of heart!"

"You laugh because you do not trust me," Liane sullenly complained. "I have for months devoted myself to you—this is my reward."

"Prove me ungrateful, my dear," Lanyard lightly offered. "Prove me skeptical without sound cause and provocation—and you can ask nothing of me that I will refuse you in testimony to my penitence."

A stare of new intensity enveloped him. He saw her countenance overcast with petulance, an odd frame for eyes of singular wistfulness.

"You are wrong to tempt me with such a promise . . ."

"Why?" Lanyard parried. "Are you afraid of the test, or that I won't make good my word?"

"What makes me hesitate is fear lest you try to make your word good against your will. It's your love I want, Michael, not your duty—another name for hatred!"

"Do you truly believe you'd find me so contemptible, Liane? You should know me better than that."

"I know men better than you do, my dear friend; and when all's said, I know you are but little different from any other; only it is my lot to see you different . . ."

"Believe me," Lanyard began in some constraint, "I am not insensible—"

"No! say nothing now. When you have heard me out it shall be for you to say then whether or not I deserve better than mockery from you. But I prophesy, you will end by forgetting the fine promise you have just now made . . ."

Impressed against his bias, Lanyard gave a nod and nothing more; and then, seeing that she still hesitated as if distressed by his direct attention, he crossed to the port and stood with his lean, worn face ruddled by the sun's last rays.

It was going down in a flaming welter of rose and gold beyond a violet smudge to starboard, a blind loom of land at a distance difficult to guess because of the dazzle, though its relative nearness was

manifest in the moderate sea that was running in its lee, all that was left to tell of that morning's fury; for while Lanyard looked, a small schooner swam astern, midway between the steamer and that dim shore, with slatting sails all black against the glare that burned the waters . . .

"Proceed, then," Lanyard prompted at length, watching the sun dip and vanish.

The woman's voice responded in a weary key from out the shadow at his elbow: "First of all, you must know you were mistaken about Mallison. He was a wretch, I don't dispute, capable of any infamy you please; but it was not he who made away with Folly's emeralds."

"You say that, no doubt, because he contrived to establish some sort of an alibi that resulted in his acquittal."

"He was never tried; he was granted liberty under bail and disappeared."

"And you reckon that proof of his innocence? Or is one to understand you absolve the fellow on Morphew's say-so?"

"But on your own, Michael."

"Mine!"

"You cannot know everything you confided to me after your accident; the many curious secrets you told me, such as that you remembered clearly having broken into Folly's and stolen her emeralds, beside yourself as you were that night with drink, and rebellious into the bargain against a social order that kept you poor and so prohibited your marrying Madame de Montalais."

The brief sub-tropic twilight was ebbing fast, night was sweeping swiftly over the face of the waters to blot out the last lingering souvenir of the routed sun. Lanyard looked down as it were into a well of gloom in which a blur of spectral pallor swam, source of those accents which were enunciating proofs of an intimacy with his mind and heart that passed all believing.

"I told you that!"

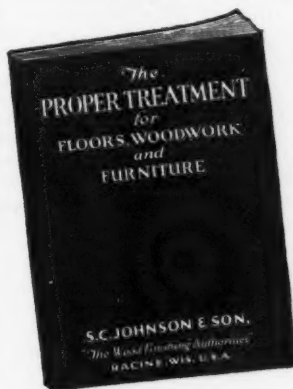
A low unhappy laugh floated up to him: "But more!"

"Under what circumstances?"

"Let me go back to the beginning . . . The night after that rencontre of yours with Mallison, Morphew dined me at the Abbaye, another of his establishments where the maitre-d'hôtel happened to be a protégé of mine from Paris of pre-war days—but Morphew knew nothing about that. He had just finished telling how you had humiliated him before Folly and was making my blood curdle with vague threats to be revenged—oh but you were wrong to make an enemy of that one, Michael!—when he was called to the telephone. He came back grinning hideously and said his agents reported having traced you and Madame de Montalais to the Inn of the Green Woods. And you would never, Morphew boasted, return to New York the same man. I tried to wheedle him into disclosing his mind, but he was too wary, I learned nothing; and the best I could manage was to bribe my maitre-d'hôtel, as soon as Morphew's back was turned again, to try to get a warning through to you by telephone. Then I made believe to be indisposed, got rid of Morphew and engaged an automobile I had used before . . . Never, my friend, shall I forget that ride! Not even that night of our flight to Cherbourg from Paris was its equal for wildness . . . if you remember . . ."

A hand found Lanyard's in the murk

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and clasped it tightly. He suffered it, replying simply, "I remember."

"Let me tell you, Michael, when we swung wide to clear your automobile by the roadside, and that other in which Morpheus's people were pursuing you came hurtling toward us like a Juggernaut gone mad, I did not hope to live another minute. As it turned out, my hired car came through with a crumpled fender for all damage. It was the other cannoned off and turned turtle in the ditch. The men in it escaped somehow with their lives, though they crawled back to the road too badly shaken to be dangerous. I left them trying to fit a tire from their wrecked car to yours, and took you and Madame de Montalais back to New York with me. She had wrenched an ankle, falling into the ditch when you flung her off the road, and was unable to walk; otherwise she had come to no harm. But you—it seemed a miracle you lived . . ."

"You had your right arm and two ribs broken, and a great gash in your head—you'll find the scar under your hair. The surgeons said it meant concussion of the brain; you might survive but never could be your mental self again. It was two months before you were able to talk connectedly, more than a few words at a time. I took you to my apartment from the hospital and myself nursed you through your convalescence. As it progressed, one saw that mentally as well as bodily your recovery would be complete—it was your spirit had been wounded beyond mending. All your old vivacity was gone, Michael, you never laughed; you seemed fond of having me near you but fonder still of being solitary, sitting all alone with your black thoughts, brooding . . ."

"Madame de Montalais came to see you daily. She, too, was quick to observe the change. I never knew what passed between you, naturally, but that you were neither of you happy it was easy to perceive. One day she called when I was out; I met her, leaving, as I returned—she had been weeping. She never called again. Not long after, her name appeared in the newspapers as one of the notables sailing on the Paris for France . . ."

The voice in the darkness ran out, Lanyard's hand was freed, a long pause was filled with the throbbing of the engines, the hiss and suck of water down the side, the mellow calling of the ship's bell.

In dull abstraction Lanyard counted its strokes: seven bells, half-past seven o'clock.

The port, a square of ultramarine let into a blank black wall, framed a nocturne, silken swells with dusky bosoms stung by starlight; on the nearest point of land a great red constant star following the progress of the steamer with unfriendly stare, somewhat astern another of sardonic green; far ahead, low upon the horizon, a third, more volatile, winking white and white . . . A thought like flotsam drifted with the dark tide of despond: a long swim to either light, even for a man in his prime . . .

Lanyard heard flat metallic tones pronounce "Continue, if you please" and realized that he had heard himself speaking.

"You never told me what had happened, but I was soon able to guess. A day or so later—I remember it was the first day when you were permitted to walk about a bit—you opened your heart to me in a way I

hadn't looked for, and made mine very sad for you. You told me how your memory of that affair at Folly's had become clear and positive, somehow, in sequence to your accident, and had satisfied you there could be no profit for any man in contending against his nature, the arbiter of his fate. Nature, you said, had formed you a thief and an enemy of society—you had grown resigned to give over struggling to be other than as you had been made. I told you, no matter what you might do, I would always be your friend—more, if you would. You were sweet to me that night, Michael, without committing yourself to definite promises; but the next day you disappeared. I was out for the afternoon, and neither of the maids saw you leave. You took nothing with you but the clothing you wore. I neither saw nor heard from you for many weeks. But New York did . . ."

Lanyard all at once swung round, caught the seated woman roughly by her shoulders, lifted her by main strength to her feet and with hard eyes searched the face revealed by the dull blue glimmer seeping in through the port.

"Is this the truth you are telling me, Liane?"

Pliant and passive in his hands, she answered, "The whole truth, Michael."

"You swear it?"

"By the love I bear you."

With a mutter of apology he released her, and silently, like a figure of fair marble sinking into a pool of ink, the pale shade of her subsided through the shadows, lost definition and rested as before.

"I am listening . . ."

"It didn't take the newspapers long to guess the Lone Wolf was at work again. In quick succession, Michael, you consummated a series of exploits that beggared the most lurid chapters of your old Parisian days."

"How can you say it was I?"

"You confessed to me yourself—"

"Be careful, Liane!"

"I tell you only the truth as I had it from your own lips. If you are reluctant to hear . . ."

"Forgive me."

"You came to me in my apartment without warning one midnight; at your wits' ends, police snapping at your heels, you turned to me . . . But it was no easy task to hide you, when rewards of more than fifty thousand dollars were being advertised for your arrest, and every Boy Scout in the land was carrying a copy of your photograph—"

"But I have never been photographed in my life except for passport purposes during the war; and my appearance today is not as it was then, I no longer wear a beard—"

"You nevertheless had recently been photographed by flashlight, in the act of opening a safe in the Stuyvesant Ashe home. Some ingenious member of the household, in anticipation of the Lone Wolf's visit, had rigged up a camera commanding the safe and a flashlight to be set off by electric current when the door was tampered with. You were caught at close range, facing the camera as you knelt with your ear to the safe door, listening to its mechanism. The likeness was exact and unmistakable; and all the papers reproduced it to further the hue and cry."

"You tell me that happened—and ask

me to believe without w

"To the utterly; but of the inv chance—o where you trouble."

Lanyard throat. "a reformer. If I was th But to re woman—I police . . who once Europe a catch him then?"

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me to believe the Lone Wolf left that house without wrecking the camera!"

"To the contrary you destroyed a camera utterly; but there were two, the ingenuity of the inventor had been equal to that chance—one carefully concealed, the other where you might find it without too much trouble."

Lanyard had an unpleasant laugh in his throat. "Decidedly he was right who said a reformed crook could never come back. If I was the dupe of so cheap a trick . . . But to resume: I appealed to you—to a woman—to stand between me and the police . . . Ask them to believe that who once hunted the Lone Wolf across Europe and back again—and failed to catch him! . . . Well and good—what then?"

"The chase struck a false scent and passed us by; but from that time on you made your home with me. It was safe, that had been proved; and I was useful to you."

"How useful?"

"You had got together a collection of jewelry difficult to dispose of without courting arrest; also, you would have found it impracticable to take care of large sums of money such as this sale realized. I saw to all that for you; through Morpheus I found a way to market the jewels, and in my own name I carried your funds in a separate account with my bankers."

"And I still called myself the Lone Wolf!"

"I think you were learning to be less jealous of your loneliness, Michael. You had learned—as most men do at some stage in life—that there was one woman at least whose devotion would never fail you."

"I used to know the Lone Wolf well—a strange belief for him to hold!"

"But life had forged yet another bond between us . . ."

The vibrations of Liane's words died into a suppliant silence. It grew long while in her hearing the pulsing of the engines aped the tempo of a funeral march. Lanyard made no move or sound. Vision tempered to the gloom and made keen by hunger saw his face, its salient lines picked out by gleams of deflected starlight, steadfast to the port, and inscrutably set.

If he would not speak she must . . . "I loved you well, and love comes of loving . . . of being loved."

"You wish me to understand," Lanyard translated bluntly, "I became your lover."

"Yes."

"Yet you knew I loved Madame de Montalais—"

"You swore to me all that was finished."

"And you believed?"

"I wanted to."

Another silence spun itself into minutes charged with emotion pent and mute. The woman felt rather than saw the sign of a hand that bade her resume. But her tongue stumbled, she was breathless with misgivings . . .

"What more do you wish me to say, Michael?"

"There is more to tell, surely, a hiatus to be filled in between that time and this." But still she faltered till he added in enforced patience: "I have yet to learn what brings us together aboard this vessel."

"Your own vanity must answer for that, Michael . . . You had been several weeks inactive, the newspaper sensation had begun to blow over, we were planning



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to return to Paris—though you balked at becoming indebted to Morpew for the forged passports he offered to secure. Then one day the Chief of Police gave out an interview exalting himself at your expense; and in that quaint, excitable temper which you had nursed ever since the motor accident, exasperated beyond reason, you vowed to expose the man's incompetence, and did—breaking into his home and making off with a necklace of diamonds which he had just presented to his wife. But somehow you must have blundered, or your luck had turned; you hardly escaped being caught, and left your path of flight so plainly marked it led the police to my very door. We had to fly New York between two suns, with no choice but to seek refuge in some country which did not require passports. This steamer was the first that sailed for South America; we secured passage, came aboard separately and pretended to be strangers till that officious doctor insisted on presenting you as a compatriot of mine."

"And now"—Lanyard demanded of himself more than of the woman—"what?"

"If you would only consent to listen to me . . ."

"By what you tell me, Liane, the experience would be anything but a novel one for you."

"Morpew remains my good friend—"

"Permit me to wish you joy of him."

"And is willing for my sake to be yours."

"Unfortunately I have the prejudice to be loved for my own blue eyes or not at all."

"I am not suspected; it would be a simple matter for me to send a wireless, in a code which Morpew gave me, to his factors at Nassau. They might easily manage some mishap for the men who wait there for you; or failing that, arrange an escape for you subsequent to your arrest—"

"Make your mind at ease on that account, Liane. I don't mean to be arrested."

"So much the better. Morpew maintains a secret base on one of the outlying cays of the Bahamas, where his boats rendezvous with those that fetch the liquor from overseas. With the aid of his factors, it should be an easy matter to smuggle you out to that base and on board some British vessel homeward bound."

"Many thanks; but I shall earn my salvation without the aid of Morpew's lot, or never. Moreover, I have no wish to see England again until I am able to go there openly and disembark in the sunlight, wearing my own face and name—Michael Lanyard."

"But that can never be!"

"In that event, I must end my days in America."

"But are you truly mad enough to imagine there could be any way?"

"There is but one course possible for me. I must find my way back to New York—under my own power, as the saying runs—and make reparation for the evil I have done—"

"Nothing of that was done by you in your right mind, Michael."

"Pardon—but it seems a nice question which mind of mine, today's or yesterday's, is 'right.' Neither do I think society will be disposed to split hairs concerning my liability for acts committed whilst my intelligence was—constructively, at least—under a cloud. Nor, for that matter, am I; if I may not clear the name of Michael Lanyard or wipe out the score against him,

Cosmopolitan for June, 1923

I have little use—no, none—for the liberty of André Duchemin."

In uncontrollable disquietude, the woman rose. "What do you propose then?"

"I have made no plan."

"If you won't have Morpew's help—"

"My dear Liane—that 'if' of yours is downright, voluptuous redundancy."

"But we are due at Nassau at dawn, the police will board us with the pilot boat—"

"Eight bells has just sounded; it should be daybreak by four o'clock, at this season. In other words, I command eight hours of darkness. And the Lone Wolf that lives on in Michael Lanyard, let me tell you, is hardly the half-witted cur you have sketched to me, who cowered behind a woman's skirts in terror of American police."

Discovering Liane's arm about him, her face strained up to him, Lanyard caught himself up sharply, shrugged and wagged a long-suffering head: "My dear Liane!"

She said in a sob: "You do not mean it—"

"But very truly, my dear."

"Yesterday your dear, today less than the dust!"

"You are mistaken. I owe you too much—"

"You will never repay it now. Did I not foretell that, when I had told you everything, you would forget your pledge to me? 'Prove me ungrateful'—out of your own mouth, Michael!—'and you can ask nothing of me I will refuse to do in testimony to my penitence.'"

Still unresisting in her embrace, he asked: "And I am already proved ungrateful in your sight?"

"Do you not mean to forsake me, put me by, now I am of no more use?"

"I have not said so."

"What else do you intend, when you tell me of your determination to go back to New York?"

"One must first pay one's debts—"

"Then the debt you owe my love and devotion stands second to the debt you owe self-love?"

"Say rather, self-respect; wanting that, no man can claim to deserve any woman's love. Let me first of all settle my reckoning with society—"

"There will be nothing of you left for me!"

"In one breath you urge me to hold myself blameless for wrongs done to others that I don't remember, in the next you call me to account for obligations to you incurred under the same conditions."

"I am not concerned with consistency, Michael, but with love. You have made yourself too dear to me, even though you didn't know what you were doing—I can't go on without you now. You hold your dream of honesty dear; do not deny me my dream of decency. Back there in New York we joined our lives, outlaw and outcast; we must go on together or forego all hope for all time. Give me at least the fair chance you ask for yourself . . ."

Her prayers ran out in a mumble under a hand which gently closed her mouth; ears not deaf to them had been quick none the less to pick up footfalls in the passageway. Now in the hush that fell the knob of the stateroom door rattled, the door itself creaked to the pressure of a shoulder, someone swore indignantly beyond it, and immediately a knock weighted with authority resounded on its panels.

In the panting bosom pressed to his Lanyard felt the heart leap and flutter wildly. To a whisper of dismay, "They have come for you already!" he returned "Never fear—they shan't get me."

The summons was repeated.

"What can you do?" Liane breathed.

"Nothing, so long as I am not free to move."

Her arms fell away, but her hands lingered upon his shoulders. In the passage several men were confabulating in mutters dulled by the intervening door. One became articulate in vexation: "I tell you, he didn't get enough dope in that powder to make him sleep like this!"

Again Liane's whisper: "What shall we do?"

Lanyard considered: "We can't keep them out . . . may as well let them in."

"But you said you wouldn't give yourself up—"

"No more do I mean to."

The knuckles of authority drummed on for a moment. When they ceased Lanyard was hailed right cheerily: "I say, Mr. Duchemin! wake up, let me in. It's I, Doctor Bright. Can't you hear me?"

"But Michael," the whisper implored him, "you can't defy the whole ship!"

"Why did you bring that pistol, then?"

"Not in anticipation of anything like this—"

"Don't worry—I shan't use it. I've a better plan. I count on you—stand by to draw the bolt when I give the word."

Lanyard watched the dim shape of Liane fall back to the door. Bright was yapping with a Judas tongue, bidding him open in the sacred name of fellowship. With the thick voice of one just awakened from the deep sweet sleep of an innocent Lanyard responded: "Half a minute! What's the row?" Then more quietly, "Ready, Liane?"

"Yes, but—"

"Fall back behind the door as you open it."

No time-wasting preparations to make, only a dressing gown to shrug out of, he stood in shirt and trousers, shoeless. "Now!"

As the bolt grated, Lanyard set a foot upon the transom, a hand to the sill of the window port, and lifted himself nimbly through that narrow outlet, dropping to the deck on feet as furtive as a cat's.

For an instant he stood glancing alertly forward, aft, and over the rail. The deck was deserted, a solitary coast light abeam blinked forlornly, a minute spark lost beyond a measureless waste of grim black water. Dubiously Lanyard considered it—a pull to daunt the heart of the boldest swimmer . . .

The dark port behind him turned into a square of staring amber. Through it broke a din of voices blasphemous in anger and disappointment. Lanyard darted aft.

The watch on the after deck witnessed the plunge of a dark body from the rail of the promenade deck down over the side. A man who appeared at the same rail an instant later lifted up a voice of authentic seafaring whine:

"Man oo-verboard!"

The watch took up the cry . . .

The nerve and daring of the Lone Wolf culminate in an exploit that will hold you breathless—in July COSMOPOLITAN.



She lacked poise

TWO women at luncheon were engaged in conversation. Although they were apparently of the same age, one was more vigorous and well-preserved. In her every manner were displayed poise and animation that were noticeably absent in her companion.

The other woman showed that in her mind was constant fear or uneasiness. You might have said, "She was self-conscious". Really she lacked poise.

The two women had been friends in early girlhood. The first woman was the president of a large club; was prominent in many activities; and in addition, had three children and many household duties. She was keen enough to observe her friend's sub-conscious anxiety and worry.

"Why worry over your health?"

"It seems too bad," she said, "that you should permit yourself to worry over your health, because to my mind it is entirely unnecessary. There is no reason why you should not be as vigorous and strong as I am."

The second woman told her that she had observed many women of her own age who had been obliged to drop their work and who had become semi-invalids.

Said the club president further: "You should by all means take a reasonable amount of exercise. Of course you cannot do any of the strenuous things that as a girl you might have done; but there is no question about the value of dancing, swimming and walking."

"Many women are careless about their diet and the matter of regular sleep. To be careful about these things is only common sense."

Feminine hygiene

"But then there is one thing to which many women fail to take heed. I refer to the vital matter of personal cleanliness or feminine hygiene."

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Mercy

(Continued from page 105)

"Tell them?" groaned Walton, terrified, his dark face yellow at the thought—that story which he had now twice in two dreadful nights related for the first time to any human being, and which, when he told it on the second night, had seemed more awful than before. No. He could never thus parade his shame again. He looked so guilty that Mose railed on him with:

"Why, say—you reckon fellows on that board haven't done things they're ashamed of, some time or another? Why, if they thought their past was all coming out next Sunday morning they'd jump and run for the woods with you. They'd stand up and be shot with you before they'd have it told."

But Walton only smiled piteously and shook his head. What were any trifling lapses in the past of his elders compared to this black sin of his own youth? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

"Those men would never consent to my staying here," he shuddered, covering his face with his hands.

The forceful features of Mose Mullen softened unbelievably, and his voice mellowed almost to trembling. "Why, say, Bob," he reproached him tenderly, "you just don't know those boys at all. Why, there isn't a man on that board that don't want to do the right thing. They just don't know what the right thing is. I'm going to show 'em."

And the very next night Mose was showing them. He had the elders sitting round him in an awed circle, hearing for the first time the reason why they had received the resignation of their minister. They were quite as much shocked as their president, George Fawcett, had been. They were appalled and rather pathetic as they struggled to comprehend this one-time infamy of the man whom, until this hour, they had worshiped almost to adoration. George, seeing this, emphasized the one extenuating circumstance of the Mullen narrative; for Mose had wrung out of Walton the admission that all these years he had been dividing his income to make provision for the education and support of those first two sons of his, now grown to manhood; and something for their mother.

But besides being a redeeming feature, this proved something else. It revealed that through all his covert life the man had allowed his wife to know where he was, giving her power over him, to hurl him from his pulpit, to fling him into jail even. It proved also that, having this power, she had not exercised it. She, so deeply injured, so cruelly hurt, had allowed him to go forward on a widening and mounting career of usefulness and never once had pricked the bright bubble of his fame. She may have been awed by what God was doing through him, or she may have been touched by that in Robert N. Wills or Walton which made people feel with and for him. But it seemed to the elders forbearance—fearbearance almost divine.

And if she could be forbearing, so could they. That was what Mose Mullen argued.

"It isn't often a church gets a chance to do the right thing—to do a great big Christian thing," he told them, as he had told the pastor and his wife. "You've got it now. God has forgiven this man. The results show it. Can't this church forgive

him? God has stood by him. Isn't this church going to stand by him—after what he's done for it?"

The elders twisted unhappily. The sin was old, but they had just heard of it. They saw it happening—this very night—the glowing young man, forgetting his wife and two babies to depart hastily with another glowing young woman who—why—the jaws of the elders dropped.

"Why," stammered one of them, "why, she—she's—" and then he stopped, breathless.

"Oh, yes; yes," explained Mose, quickly. "There was a divorce. She's been a wife ever since . . . ever since he got the divorce."

The elders leaned back with a relieved sigh; for they had felt all the time that the union of this man and this woman must have been somehow hallowed long before ever they met them. Yet it was hard for them not to see the whole thing in terms of headlines in a newspaper—clear across the top of the page, huge black letters, huge black phrases that would denounce and characterize a horrible black act and draw a horrible black smear across the face of a man—a man who had been, until they accepted his resignation last night, their pastor.

Arguing, pleading, old Mose, employing every verbal resource at his command, turned at last to poetry; for that is one of his charms; his mind is full of poetry.

"This life's a middling crooked trail and
after forty year
Of knocking round, I'm free to say that
right ain't always clear.
I've seen a lot of folks go wrong—get off
the main highroad
An' fetch up in a swamp somewhere—
almost before they knowed.
I don't set up to be no judge of right and
wrong in men;
I ain't been perfect all my life and may
not be again;
An' when I see a chap who looks as though
he'd gone astray,
I want to think he started right an' only
lost his way."

Mose Mullen tried this from an anonymous vernacular poem and then marked its effect. When he saw a stern-lipped elder's mouth begin to quiver, he gushed two stanzas more, winding up with:

"I've seen 'em circlin' thro' the dusk with
twilight getting gray
An' looking for the main highroad—poor
chaps who'd lost the way."

Mullen almost sobbed out this last line and studied the jury of his elders as he did. Some of them were perspiring now. They were wavering; he saw it. They were visioning Robert N. Walton looking for "the main highroad," and seeming to find it—a main highroad that had led him at last to them. There were tears standing in every eye. George Fawcett was weeping shamelessly.

The voice of Mullen, "old Mose," who, some people thought, was hard, went on, melting in its tenderness, as he chanted rather than quoted the last verse, his body swaying with the rhythm. It ended:

"An' when I see a chap who looks as if he'd
gone astray
I want to shove my hand in his and help him
find the way."

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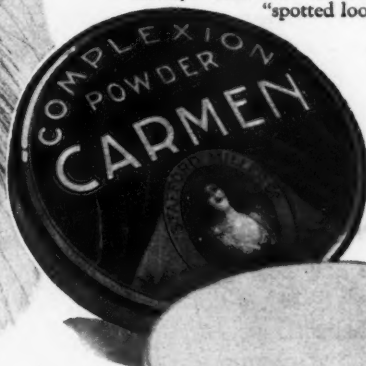
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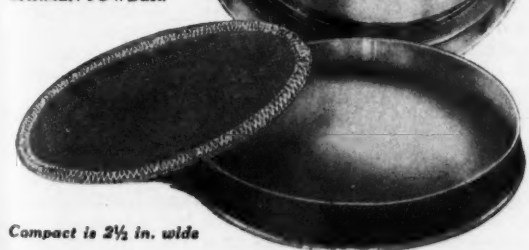
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"Boys," pleaded Mose, "let's shove our hands in Bob Walton's and help him find the way!"

It was an almost irresistible appeal. It won the hearts of the elders; yet nothing could win them from their conception of duty to the church.

"He can come before the full board Sunday afternoon and tell his story. It will be up to them." That was the nearest to a verdict that Mullen could wring from his jury. The men were still too appalled by what they had heard to be courageous in dealing out forgiveness.

And the full board! That meant the sixteen elders and the forty or fifty deacons. That meant Robert N. Walton's coming before these many people and harrowing his soul while he paraded his shame. Mose Mullen was heavy in his heart. He felt almost as if he had failed. He didn't know whether he could get Walton to consent or not. Besides, could sixty men be expected to keep a secret like this? He doubted it. It was almost to invite defeat—to assure it. But—there was no other way, and he so informed the minister, who, as he had foreseen, immediately took fright.

"Tell the whole board? all of them? right out in the open that way? I—I couldn't," faltered Walton. "I could never do it."

"How God Almighty does hate a coward!" frowned Mullen. "Stand up to the lick-log, Bob, and take your medicine."

By a combination of persistence and persuasion he actually got the man up to the point where he was willing to attempt the confession; but it was because he loved so many men in E—, because he wanted his great work to go on and because he did believe that he would never have courage to start again anywhere else.

Mrs. Walton, with her woman's intuitions, also was fearful. Sixteen men now knew their story, besides that terrible man who had written the denunciatory letter. She could not believe that sixteen elders could keep the secret from their wives; and she recalled bitterly those lines of Byron:

And every woe a tear can claim,
Except an erring sister's shame.

With all her years of sacrifice and suffering, she shrank from any pointing fingers and confided her fears to Mose. He, dear old rough diamond, comforted and bulwarked her with assurances of organized support.

"Mrs. Mullen will meet you in front of the church and kiss you," he promised. "She will walk right down the aisle and sit beside you. After the sermon three hundred women will come up and kiss you and put their arms around you."

But Walton's misgivings were even greater than his wife's. Difficult as it had been every Sunday morning of his life with her to drag himself to the church and into the pulpit, he found this the most difficult day of all. Especially did he fear that when he faced the Bible class, Hollis Gant, the letter writer, might stand up and denounce him. But in the class that morning, lo, there was Moses Mullen, strong and forceful, with his stocky figure, sitting right beside Hollis Gant, and on the other side of him a man I'd like to mention because it is a name known all over America now. His name and picture are this very morning of my writing on the front page of one of New York's great daily newspapers. But the same reasons which

suppress the names of other actors in this moving drama suppress his.

Well, there they sat, these two strong, determined men, embracing the young zealot most affectionately and most effectively; and the sight of them made Walton feel how great is the practical strength of loyal personal friendship. It helped him to get through the entire morning service.

The demonstration of the women over Mrs. Walton took place just as old Mose had said it would; yet so skilfully was it managed that never a hint of design was manifest in it. It seemed just a sudden, spontaneous welling up of the esteem in which the women held the wife of their pastor. Not even Walton himself was permitted to suppose it was any more; and it heartened him amazingly. It gave him resolution to carry out his promise to go to the joint board meeting at four o'clock of this Sunday afternoon, buoyed up by the hope that he and his wife might thereby win the right to remain among these people who loved them so.

Now deacons, it will be recognized, are usually younger men than elders, more active, energetic and demonstrative. In any gathering of sixteen elders and forty or fifty deacons, it will be the deacons who give color to the mass appearance. That was what happened this day. And it wanted but one glimpse at the color of this meeting to know that those sixteen elders had kept their secret absolutely. They sat, grave, silent, repressed, as became elders; but the deacons were smiling and expectant—happy, unaware—supposing their beloved leader had called them together thus suddenly to break some delightful good news to them, to acquaint them with some new enterprise in Christ in which he would direct them.

There were but two unofficial members of the church present. Moses Mullen was one; Hollis Gant was the other. Him, Mose had brought along, that his desire to hear Robert N. Walton tell who and what he was might be fully gratified.

But this attitude of receptive joy on the part of his board changed somewhat the color of that story which Walton had intended to tell. It filled him with a fresh sense of his unworthiness. It plunged him into yet deeper sloughs of guilty consciousness. It made him abandon the hope that he might be permitted to remain here, and his confession from that moment had no external objective. It became, all in a second, an unburdening—nothing else. He stood brokenly, telling the class that he was not himself, that he was Robert N. Wills, a fraud, an imposter, an—he choked over the word and never uttered it. He stammered out that he had been a traducer in his life of the cause that for a quarter of a century he had upheld with his words. He tendered his resignation all over again; he told them he had preached his last sermon, that when this meeting was over he would slip out and away into that oblivion which is always the kindest abode a Judas may ever hope to find.

There was a hollow sob in Walton's voice as he uttered the last word; and there followed painful silence. "Most painful minute and a half I ever went through," one man said to me; though I doubt that it was a minute and a half. It could not have been more than a few seconds until

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that sob in the minister's throat was echoed by sixty men weeping as one. There were exclamations, cries, incoherent attempts to speak, to frame resolutions, to call out encouragement, with someone stating a resolution and the chair announcing that it was passed unanimously; after which the joint board meeting became a thing of motion, of eager, emotional men flowing forward, climbing over the pews, hurrying down the aisles to reach Robert N. Walton and take him into their arms, hold him to their hearts, seal to him their forgiveness and faith and loyalty forever.

When it was all over, out of the confusion minutes were evolved which showed that the board had utterly refused to accept the pastor's resignation and that a resolution had been passed unanimously declaring the affair of the afternoon to be "a forgotten incident" and binding all present never to discuss it with any member of the board or with anybody else so long as they lived. And they meant it. But it was one of those kinds of incidents that could never be forgotten.

Mose Mullen stood by while the board was milling round its pastor, happy for his friend, but proud, oh tremendously proud, for his church because it had shown its ability to rise high and do a great Christian act.

But there were certain practical considerations that immediately engaged his mind. If this were to become a forgotten incident, some of the forgetting had to be arranged for very practically. With a story known to sixty persons, however noble and determined their intent to keep it secret, it must inevitably leak out; and it might leak in such a way as to ruin the man they all were bent on saving. One printed line of this story and the damage would be done. Obviously that line must not be printed.

Now Mose, with all his cynicism, was a man of large faith in human nature. Within an hour of this meeting of the board he had called the newspaper men together—the reporters of the dailies of this populous city of E—, news organs that were not one whit behind others in America in enterprise. To these men Mullen told without reservation the story of Robert N. Walton. They sat gasping, gaping with widening eyes, checking only momentarily an impulse to rise and rush for the door. It was the greatest local news sensation these men had ever encountered. It was a U. P. story good for columns and columns the country across. They saw the headlines; not a mind but was busy with the framing of the "lead," when old Mose added quietly:

"But of course you mustn't say a word about it. You mustn't."

There followed a silence while the men imbibed the spirit of what it was this church was trying to do. And then they agreed. They mustn't. Each man gave his pledge. Of course managing editors had to be told; but they too rose to that spiritual height demanded of them by the indomitable Mullen. Not a line of the affair was printed.

That was a marvelous compact in itself—marvelous in its effect; yet after all it was purely negative. There was nothing negative about Walton. He could never thrive on negatives. His was a positive nature. He had to be cooperated with—not merely left alone. At the moment when Mullen was making all secure with



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the newspaper men, Walton was at home in a chill of despair. Reaction had come to him. It would come, he saw, to the others. His brethren had been swept up to a crest of noble emotions; they would wallow presently in the trough of that sea. Officially and sincerely they had forgiven him; but—they would remember. They would take his hand tomorrow, but—they would remember! He would read it in the breaking of their glance. Every time they looked at him they would remember; every time they spoke of him they would remember the pitiable truth. He would know this and, with his sensitive nature, it would ruin him, make him sterile, useless. He might as well go, after all. It had been in vain. He was done for. That was what Walton was thinking; and shrewd old Mullen, knowing the man well, was realizing the same thing.

As he left the newspaper men he put it into words to that friend who had helped him police the zepilot in the Bible class, by saying: "Bob Walton can be now just—just a *singed cat* or—he can be big—bigger than he ever was. Let's make him bigger."

The two joined hands upon the proposition and Mose began immediately to lay plans and within an hour to execute them—first at the church. That very night as the forty deacons were seating the congregation subtle propaganda was poured into receptive ears and the fires of a new and pentecostal enthusiasm for the minister were kindled. Walton felt it the minute he entered the church door and fear went out of him forever. He faced his people with a new courage and a new confidence; he felt a new freedom and a new power, and preached as he had never preached before.

Moses Mullen, watching keenly, saw this, felt it and rejoiced in it; but his astuteness descried another danger. There were the other churches—for this was one of the best church cities in America; and these other churches all had ministers. The story would get round and, true to the genius of rumor, in its worst form; whereat some outraged preacher, jealous for the whiteness of the pulpit, might break out in fiery public denunciation. Yet far less than this would have quenched the sensitive spirit of Walton, who was keenly alive to the affectionate loyalties of his brothers of the cloth. Let but one of them gaze upon him with coldly accusing eye or draw his Prince Albert aside from him as he passed, and Walton would be done for. Yes, this story, once so many people knew it, was bound to run like a prairie fire; and Mose resolved to fight it as he would a conflagration on the plains, by *backfire*.

He called the ministers of the city of E—together and he told them the true story of Robert N. Walton, extenuating nothing—but, the *true* story; and then he appealed to them to aid in a process of salvation and appealed with confidence. For he believed in these men exactly as he had believed in his own church board: that they were Christians; that they were human and brotherly and would leap at the opportunity to do a big Christian thing.

"Boys," he said familiarly, for he was older than most of them, "I want you to help this church save Bob Walton."

The ministers had listened, very much as the elders had, with spasms of shock and pain; but they were quicker to respond. With spontaneous generosity their hearts went out to the man. Knowing in their

own souls how the minister is tempted, knowing better than anyone else what Walton's long struggle must have been like, they leaped to their feet with ready assurance of brotherly support.

But Mullen was not done yet with his backfiring. He turned next to his lodge—that lodge of twelve hundred Masons which he had induced Walton to join.

"You are ruining me," Walton, protested, fearfully hurt, "telling everybody my story."

"No, I'm not," insisted Mullen, wise with the wisdom of the children of light and wily with the cunning of the generations of darkness. "No, I'm not." And he told the men of the lodge, told them with a good deal of emotion and unashamed pathos. Those twelve hundred Masons heard it with blanched faces, strained and breathless, and with a sigh of disappointment at realizing that their admired brother of the cloth was but flesh as they themselves were flesh. They were distressed by the facts, but got a quick perspective on them; they saw that the incident was long past; they perceived that he had done much to expiate it. Moreover, he was a brother Mason and in trouble, and it is a principle of their code to stand by a brother in trouble. Their sympathies were immediately enlisted.

"You can't just—tolerate him, brothers. You've got to go to him—lift him up." That was what Mullen had pointed out.

And the lodge did lift him up. It clamored for his appearance on every occasion. Those Masons made him speak at their banquets, participate at their funerals, solemnize their weddings. They applauded his every utterance and they pleaded with him to lead them into whatever good work he would. The lodge vied with the church, which was rallying more and more unitedly every week to multiply the power of his ministry. The Bible class applauded when he entered the room, applauded his every utterance, applauded when the lecture hour was over and he left them. As George Fawcett said to me: "They hung upon his words and upon his arms and were eager to do his bidding."

The clergy, too, were making good on their covenant with Moses Mullen. From that day forth the ministerial association began deliberately to put Robert N. Walton forward, to magnify him, to exalt him. Never was a joint meeting of the churches planned but Walton must be selected as the principal speaker; never a program of any sort but he had a chief place upon it; never a platform arrangement of church dignitaries but he must be assigned the seat of honor; and these joint church gatherings hailed him as if he were some bright messenger from another world.

The newspapers readily caught the habit of magnifying the man. The classic utterances of clergymen of better brain than he went into the waste basket or to an obscure corner of the paper while the chance opinion of Robert N. Walton on the proper composition of a golf ball would find itself a headline.

And through all of this period of what was possibly excessive laudation not once did any minister, though he might have labored unrecognized for years, lift one whisper of protest at undue honor accorded to Walton. Nor ever once did Walton himself manifest the slightest egotism, the slightest suggestion that all this

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appreciation was different from that given to other men, or in any wise a tribute to him. He accepted it beamingly as a means of magnifying his influence, and his influence was always for good. Men found it inspiring just to watch him swinging along the street, his shoulders squared bravely, though they knew what memory still burdened his heart and that he was sensitive with realizing that they did know.

They knew that he was sensitive because he never spoke about it himself, not even to his intimates; not more than once or twice in five years to George Fawcett and Mose Mullen, witnessing eloquently that within his heart a door was close locked upon the tragedy. Men of his denomination who had known him in the old days and came to him now in the new days and were entertained in his house, listened, longed, for one word of confidence, one word of appeal for understanding and sympathy; but he never uttered it.

During this period, however, certain details inevitably came out; details that showed how naively simple and trustful the man had been even in his duplicity. Mose discovered, for instance, that his name had never been changed; that he was still in fact Robert N. Wills; and one day, when the court room was empty, Mullen secured an order from a judge making the name officially that under which the man's long agony had been endured and his long triumph achieved.

It was learned too that certain other persons had known all along who Robert N. Walton was. There came the story of an admirer of his in a Western city who was always lauding "Brother Walton," and of her expression of wonder that a certain woman in the boarding house invariably left the room when she began to extoll the virtues of her favorite minister. She expressed this wonder to the landlady, only to be informed gently: "Perhaps it's because the lady is his wife that she cannot bear to have him praised."

This showed again that Walton had been somehow deliberately protected in the work he had chosen to do by some of those who knew him best.

All the while now, too, his influence was widening over the city and state. His character stood the test of all this popular acclaim. He hailed his opportunities joyously; he denied himself to few of them. When the country fell into war the deep-laying patriotism in his heart was deeply stirred. He could rouse men for war service with the same good conscience that he roused them for the duties of peace.

No war meeting, nor ally of the minute men, no campaign for the raising of quotas on Liberty Loans was considered to have been properly launched if his voice was not heard in its behalf. He spoke one night at the state fair grounds to all the thousands that could crowd within the range of his voice and roused them to white-hot enthusiasm. Other states pleaded for him. Special trains whirled him hither and yon.

So he gave himself, his magnificent physical strength supporting him so well that it was with a kind of surprise that people heard one day that he was ill. It was Mrs. Walton who had divined prophetically, a good while before that these his fruitful fifties might be also his failing fifties.

It was front page news when the fact became public that he was ill; it was



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scare head news when it was known that he had been taken to a sanatorium; and from there bulletins of his condition were played up in the daily papers of E—as if a president had been prostrated. The minds of all the city were centered in anxiety on that sanatorium. The reports grew grave, grew uncertain, grew hopeless. The churches, the lodges, the whole city, began to realize that their idol was very ill, but they were unprepared for the abrupt announcement that he was dead; but so it was. Those that loved him most stood by and saw his spirit flicker and go out. They saw his face at peace, saw that, of a truth, dark shadows lay beneath his eyes; saw about his mouth the lines of that heroic battle with sin which he had fought and won.

For an hour the people of E—marveled that this strong man and vigorous, so valiant in every cause but his own, should lie down and die in just a day or two of illness; but presently they realized. He had worn himself out for them, spending and being spent; he had no vitality left with which to fight disease.

Then the city gave itself up to mourning. Never in its history or that of the state had so many hearts been sore over the death of any man. The body lay in state in Scottish Rite Cathedral—the home of that order to which he had belonged and whose members had rallied to him so loyally. Here hundreds of men passed his bier and wept as they looked upon features which told their own story of conflict—men who had sinned perhaps as he, battled with their weakness as he, and perhaps had not triumphed so gloriously.

Again his body lay in state out in that church where he had done his last great work. There was a flagpole in front of this church—a regular part of its equipment—and as his body was borne within, the Stars and Stripes that he had cherished so fondly were floated slowly to the peak, then lowered to half-mast; as flags were hanging elsewhere in the city.

To that very spot where he had stood, confessing to his board, the casket was borne while the organ wailed its requiem, and as the building echoed with the weeping of the congregation it woke in some minds the memory of the echoing sobs of the man himself while he had torn out the truth from his heart.

Flowers, flowers, flowers! They covered the casket, they covered the pulpit, they all but obscured the organ.

"I never saw such a funeral," said one minister to me, and he had seen many.

Orders, societies, associations, churches, individuals had sent their quotas and their tributes. There came poor and humble folk, whom his congregation wondered that he had found time to know, bringing poor little gifts of a single rose or geranium or hollyhock, culled from some wretched back-yard garden, and laid them with tears among the more elaborate floral pieces.

The church, for one to voice its grief, had sent far, borrowing from his high service one of those five boys who had entered the ministry under Robert N. Walton's persuasion in the little river town of B—. He tried to speak their sorrow for the people and mingled with it his own

broken tribute to the man whose broken life had been mended so beautifully.

Two miles of automobiles followed the body to its last resting place; and when the lodge ritual was concluded, a bishop of the Episcopal Church, which of course was not the deceased's denomination, was escorted to the side of the widow, where he invoked God's blessing on her and the household. Facing the open grave he spoke the earth to earth, dust to dust and ashes to ashes, intoning with deepest solemnity, his rich voice trembling when he came to "We commit his body to the ground and his soul to Almighty God."

So they laid Robert N. Walton away. "I have never seen anybody," testified George Fawcett to me, "who could so influence men by words and deeds. And if it hadn't been for Mose Mullen the church might have failed him."

There comes yet somehow one more heartthrob in knowing that when, seven months later, this church called a new pastor, it chose another one of those five boys from the town of B—, a man who had demonstrated great strength in leadership and who had now for ten years been occupying Walton's third pulpit in that flourishing city of C—. Today he stands in his pulpit at E—; and he finds it a solid work that his father in the Gospel has left to him.

Two thousand one hundred and forty-six persons gathered to welcome him on his first Sunday in the new field. The church had been shepherdless more than half a year, and yet the twelve-months' report is the greatest in the congregation's history. Walton had been building deep and strong. The church is not rich, but it had raised \$58,000 in that year; it had given fifteen thousand to missions and benevolences; the Robert N. Walton Bible Class alone had given more than four thousand dollars to causes other than its share of Sunday school expenses; and plans for doubling the entire working plant of the church were ready for the new pastor's approval. That was the enduring nature of the work which had been done by a man who had lived nearly all his days in heartbreak house.

And this is his story! If it be overembellished, over-emotionalized, the fault is mine. It has been hard—impossible—to write it coldly. If imagination has supplied details where participants were unwilling to or obviously could not be approached, it may be taken for granted that the fictions are less forceful than the realities. But the story of the man whose sin so humbled him, and of the church, the ministers, the lodges, the newspapers and the community which so exalted themselves in exalting him—that story is true. At the same time it is so marvelous that the men who lived through it can hardly believe it themselves.

"As I contemplate the life of Robert N. Walton," said that minister who had wondered at his funeral, "I am convinced that nothing but the grace of God could have made it possible."

And there are people who fancy that the grace of God is rather going out of fashion in the world!

Ida M. Evans is a name that stands for stories close to real life: One of them—an exceptionally powerful one—will appear in an early issue of COSMOPOLITAN

The Début of Battling Billson

(Continued from page 99)

inches into his leg. He seems to need something like that to give him ambition."

"I don't see how you are going to arrange to have him knifed just before each fight."

"No," said Ukridge mournfully.

"What are you going to do about his future? Have you any plans?"

"Nothing definite. My aunt was looking for a companion to attend to her correspondence and take care of the canary last time I saw her. I might try to get the job for him."

And with a horrid mirthless laugh Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge borrowed five shillings and passed out into the night.

I did not see Ukridge for the next few days but I had news of him from our mutual friend George Tupper, whom I met prancing in uplifted mood down Whitehall.

"I say," said George Tupper without preamble and with a sort of dazed fervor, "they've given me an assistant under-secretaryship."

I pressed his hand. I would have slapped him on the back, but one does not slap the backs of eminent Foreign Office officials in Whitehall in broad daylight, even if one has been at school with them.

"Congratulations," I said. "There is no one whom I would more gladly see assisting under-secretaries. I heard rumors of this from Ukridge."

"Oh yes, I remember I told him it might be coming off. Good old Ukridge. I met him just now and told him the news, and he was delighted."

"How much did he touch you for?"

"Eh? Oh, only five pounds! Till Saturday. He expects to have a lot of money by then."

"Did you ever know the time when Ukridge didn't expect to have a lot of money?"

"I want you and Ukridge to come and have a bit of dinner with me to celebrate. How would Wednesday suit you?"

"Splendidly."

"Seven-thirty at the Regent Grill, then. Will you tell Ukridge?"

"I don't know where he's got to. I haven't seen him for nearly a week. Did he tell you where he was?"

"Out at some place at Barnes. What was the name of it?"

"The White Hart?"

"That's it."

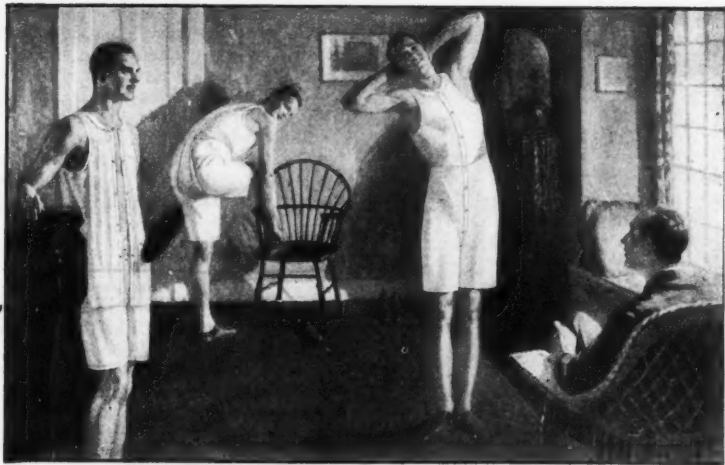
"Tell me," I said, "how did he seem? Cheerful?"

"Very. Why?"

"The last time I saw him he was thinking of giving up the struggle. He had had reverses."

I proceeded to the White Hart immediately after luncheon. The fact that Ukridge was still at that hostelry and had regained his usual sunny outlook on life seemed to point to the fact that the clouds enveloping the future of Mr. Billson had cleared away and that the latter's hat was still in the ring.

That this was so was made clear to me directly I arrived. Inquiring for my



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old friend, I was directed to an upper room, from which, as I approached, there came a peculiar thudding noise. It was caused, as I perceived on opening the door, by Mr. Billson. Clad in flannel trousers and a sweater, he was earnestly pounding a large leather object suspended from a wooden platform. His manager, seated on a soap box in a corner, regarded him the while with affectionate proprietorship.

"Hullo, old horse," said Ukridge, rising as I entered. "Glad to see you."

The din of Mr. Billson's bag punching, from which my arrival had not caused him to desist, was such as to render conversation difficult. We moved to the quieter retreat of the bar downstairs, where I informed Ukridge of the assistant under-secretary's invitation.

"I'll be there," said Ukridge. "There's one thing about good old Billson, you can trust him not to break training if you take your eye off him. And, of course, he realizes that this is a big thing. It'll be the making of him."

"Your aunt is considering engaging him, then?"

"My aunt? What on earth are you talking about? Collect yourself, laddie."

"When you left me, you were going to try to get him the job of looking after your aunt's canary."

"Oh, I was feeling rather sore then! That's all over. I had an earnest talk with the poor simp and he means business from now on. And so he ought to, dash it, with a magnificent opportunity like this."

"Like what?"

"We're on to a big thing now, laddie, the dickens of a big thing."

"I hope you've made sure the other man's a bachelor. Who is he?"

"Tod Bingham."

"Tod Bingham?" I groped in my memory. "You don't mean the middle-weight champion?"

"That's the fellow."

"You don't expect me to believe that you've got a match on with a champion already?"

"It isn't exactly a match. It's like this. Tod Bingham is going round the East End halls offering two hundred quid to anyone who'll stay four rounds with him. Advertisement stuff. Good old Billson is going to unleash himself at the Shoreditch Empire next Saturday."

"Do you think he'll be able to stay four rounds?"

"Stay four rounds!" cried Ukridge. "Why, he could stay four rounds with a fellow armed with a Gatling gun and a couple of pickaxes. That money's as good as in our pockets, laddie. And once we're through with this job, there isn't a boxing place in England that won't jump at us. I don't mind telling you in confidence, old horse, that in a year from now I expect to be pulling in hundreds a week. Clean up a bit here first, you know, and then pop over to America and make an enormous fortune. Damme, I shan't know how to spend the money!"

"Why not buy some socks? I'm running a bit short of them."

"Now, laddie, laddie," said Ukridge reprovingly, "need we strike a jarring note? Is this the moment to fling your beastly socks in an old friend's face? A broader-minded spirit is what I would like to see."

Cosmopolitan for June, 1923

I was ten minutes late in arriving at the Regent Grill on the Wednesday of George Tupper's invitation, and the spectacle of George in person standing bareheaded at the Piccadilly entrance filled me with guilty remorse. George was the best fellow in the world, but the atmosphere of the Foreign Office had increased the tendency he had always had from boyhood to a sort of precise fussiness, and it upset him if his affairs did not run exactly on schedule. The thought that my unpunctuality should have marred this great evening sent me hurrying towards him full of apologies.

"Oh, there you are!" said George. "I say, it's too bad . . ."

"I'm awfully sorry. My watch . . ."

"Ukridge!" cried George Tupper, and I perceived that it was not I who had caused his concern.

"Isn't he coming?" I asked, amazed. The idea of Ukridge evading a free meal was one of those that seem to make the solid foundations of the world rock.

"He's come. And he's brought a girl with him!"

"A girl?"

"In pink, with yellow hair," wailed George Tupper. "What am I to do?"

I pondered the point.

"It's a weird thing for even Ukridge to have done," I said, "but I suppose you'll have to give her dinner."

"But the place is full of people I know, and this girl's so—so spectacular."

I felt for him deeply, but I could see no way out of it.

"You don't think I could say I had been taken ill?"

"It would hurt Ukridge's feelings."

"I should enjoy hurting Ukridge's feelings, curse him!" said George Tupper fervently.

"And it would be an awful slam for the girl, whoever she is."

George Tupper sighed. His was a chivalrous nature. He drew himself up as if he were bracing himself for a dreadful ordeal.

"Oh well, I suppose there's nothing to do," he said. "Come along. I left them drinking cocktails in the lounge."

George had not erred when he described Ukridge's addition to the festivities as spectacular. Flamboyant would have been a suitable word. As she preceded us down the long dining room, her arm linked in George Tupper's—she seemed to have taken a liking to George—I had ample opportunity for studying her from her patent leather shoes to the mass of golden hair beneath her picture hat. She had a loud, clear voice, and she was telling George Tupper the rather intimate details of an internal complaint which had recently troubled an aunt of hers. If George had been the family physician, she could not have been franker; and I could see a dull glow spreading gradually over his shapely ears.

Perhaps Ukridge saw it, too, for he seemed to experience a slight twinge of conscience.

"I have an idea, laddie," he whispered, "that old Tuppy is a trifle peeved at my bringing Flossie along. If you get a chance, you might just murmur to him that it was military necessity."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"I told you about her. Flossie, the barmaid at the Crown in Kennington. Billson's fiancée."

I looked at him in amazement.

"Do you mean to tell me that you're courting death by flirting with Battling Billson's girl?"

"My dear old man, nothing like that," said Ukridge, shocked. "The whole thing is, I've got a particular favor to ask of her—rather a rummy request—and it was no good springing it on her in cold blood. There had to be a certain amount of champagne in advance, and my funds won't run to champagne. I'm taking her on to the Alhambra after dinner. I'll look you up tonight and tell you all about it."

We then proceeded to dine. It was not one of the pleasantest meals of my experience. The future Mrs. Billson prattled agreeably throughout, and Ukridge assisted her in keeping the conversation alive; but the shattered demeanor of George Tupper would have taken the sparkle out of any banquet. From time to time he pulled himself together and endeavored to play the host, but for the most part he maintained a pale and brooding silence; and it was a relief when Ukridge and his companion finally rose to leave.

"Well!" began George Tupper in a strangled voice, as they moved away down the aisle.

I lighted a cigar and sat back dutifully to listen.

Ukridge arrived at my rooms at midnight, his eyes gleaming through their pince-nez with a strange light. His manner was exuberant.

"It's all right," he said.

"I'm glad you think so."

"Did you explain to Tuppy?"

"I didn't get a chance. He was talking too hard."

"About me?"

"Yes. He said everything I've always felt about you, only far, far better than I could ever have put it."

Ukridge's face clouded for a moment, but cheerfulness returned.

"Oh, well, it can't be helped! He'll simmer down in a day or two. It had to be done, laddie. Life and death matter. And it's all right. Read this."

I took the letter he handed me. It was written in a scrawly hand.

"What's this?"

"Read it, laddie. I think it will meet the case."

I read:

"Wilberforce. Who on earth's Wilberforce?"

"I told you that was old Billson's name."

"Oh, yes!"

I returned to the letter.

WILBERFORCE:

I take my pen in hand to tell you that I can never be yours. You will no doubt be surprised to hear that I love another and a better man, so that it can never be. He loves me, and he is a better man than you.

Hoping this finds you in the pink as it leaves me at present,

Yours faithfully,

Florence Burns

"I told her to keep it snappy," said Ukridge.

"Well, she's certainly done it," I replied, handing back the letter. "I'm sorry."

Posed by Lois Wilson attractive Paramount motion picture star. Miss Wilson is one of many charming women of the screen who use and endorse Ingram's Milkweed Cream for promoting beauty of complexion. From a photograph by Donald Biddle Keys.



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From the little I saw of her, I thought her a nice girl—for Billson. Do you happen to know the other man's address? Because it would be a kindly act to send him a post card advising him to leave England for a year or two."

"The Shoreditch Empire will find him this week."

"What!"

"The other man is Tod Bingham."

"Tod Bingham!" The drama of the situation moved me. "Do you mean to say that Tod Bingham is in love with Battling Billson's girl?"

"No. He's never seen her."

"What do you mean?"

Ukridge sat down creakingly on the sofa. He slapped my knee with sudden and uncomfortable violence.

"Laddie," said Ukridge, "I will tell you all. Yesterday afternoon I found old Billson reading a copy of the Daily Sportsman. He isn't much of a reader as a rule, so I was rather interested to know what had gripped him. And do you know what it was, old horse?"

"I do not."

"It was an article about Tod Bingham. One of those sentimental blurbs they print about pugilists nowadays, saying what a good chap he was in private life and how he always sent a telegram to his old mother after each fight and gave her half the purse."

"Damme, there ought to be a censorship of the press. These blighters don't mind what they print. I don't suppose Tod Bingham has got an old mother, and if he has I'll bet he doesn't give her a bob. There were tears in that chump Billson's eyes as he showed me the article. Salt tears, laddie! 'Must be a nice feller!' he said."

"Well, I ask you! I mean to say, it's a bit thick when the man you've been pouring out money for and watching over like a baby sister starts getting sorry for a champion three days before he's due to fight him. A champion, mark you! It was bad enough his getting mushy about that fellow at Wonderland, but when it came to his being soft-hearted over Tod Bingham something had to be done."

"Well, you know me. Brain like a buzz-saw. I saw the only way of counteracting this pernicious stuff was to get him so mad with Tod Bingham that he would forget all about his old mother, so I suddenly thought, why not get Flossie to pretend that Bingham had cut him out with her? Well, it's not the sort of thing you can ask a girl to do without preparing the ground a bit, so I brought her along to Tuppy's dinner. It was a master stroke, laddie. There's nothing softens the delicately nurtured like a good dinner, and there's no denying that old Tuppy did us well."

"She agreed the moment I put the thing to her, and sat down and wrote that letter without a blink. I think she thinks it's all a jolly practical joke. She's a light-hearted girl."

"Must be."

"It'll give poor old Billson a bit of a jar for the time being, I suppose, but it'll make him spread himself on Saturday night, and he'll be perfectly happy on Sunday morning when she tells him she didn't mean it and he realizes that he's got a hundred quid of Tod Bingham's in his trousers' pocket."

"I thought you said it was two hundred quid that Bingham was offering."

"I get a hundred," said Ukridge dreamily.

"The only flaw is, the letter doesn't give the other man's name. How is Billson to know it's Tod Bingham?"

"Why, damme, laddie, do use your intelligence. Billson isn't going to sit and yawn when he gets that letter. He'll buzz straight down to Kennington and ask Flossie."

"And then she will give the whole thing away."

"No she won't. I slipped her a couple of quid to promise she wouldn't. And that reminds me, old man, it has left me a bit short, so if you could possibly manage . . ."

"Good night," I said.

"But, laddie . . ."

"And God bless you," I added firmly.

The Shoreditch Empire is a roomy house, but it was crowded to the doors when I reached it on the Saturday night. In normal circumstances I suppose there would always have been a large audience on a Saturday, and this evening the lure of Tod Bingham's personal appearance had drawn more than capacity.

In return for my shilling I was accorded the privilege of standing against the wall at the back, a position from which I could not see a great deal of the performance.

From the occasional flashes which I got of the stage between the heads of my neighbors, however, and from the generally restless and impatient attitude of the audience, I gathered that I was not missing much.

The program of the Shoreditch Empire that week was, essentially a one-man affair. The patrons had the air of suffering the preliminary acts as unavoidable obstacles that stood between them and the headliner. It was Tod Bingham whom they had come to see, and they were not cordial to the unfortunate serio-comics, tramp cyclists, jugglers, acrobats and ballad singers who intruded themselves during the earlier part of the evening. The cheer that arose as the curtain fell on a dramatic sketch came from the heart, for the next number on the program was that of the star.

A stout man in evening dress with a red handkerchief worn ambassadorially athwart his shirt front stepped out from the wings.

"Ladies and gentlemen!"

"Ush!" cried the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen!"

A voice: "Good ole Tod!" ("Cheese it!")

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the ambassador for the third time.

He scanned the house apprehensively. "Deeply regret have unfortunate disappointment to announce. Tod Bingham unfortunately unable to appear before you tonight."

A howl like the howl of wolves cheated of their prey or of an amphitheater full of Roman citizens on receipt of the news that the supply of lions had run out greeted these words.

We stared at each other with a wild surmise. Could this thing be, or was it not too thick for human belief?

"Wot's the matter with 'im?" demanded the gallery hoarsely.

"Yus, wot's the matter with 'im?" echoed we of the better element on the lower floor.

The ambassador sidled uneasily towards the prompt entrance. He seemed aware that he was not a popular favorite.

"E 'as 'ad an unfortunate accident," he declared, nervousness beginning to sweep away his *h's* wholesale. "On 'is way 'ere to this 'all 'e was unfortunately run into by a truck, sustaining bruises and contusions which render 'im unfortunately unable to appear before you tonight. I beg to announce that 'is place will be taken by Professor Devine, who will render 'is marvelous imitations of various birds and familiar animals. Ladies and gentlemen," concluded the ambassador, stepping nimbly off the stage, "I thank you one and all."

The curtain rose and a dapper individual with a waxed mustache skipped on.

"Ladies and gentlemen, my first imitation will be of that well known songster, the common thrush—better known to some of you per'aps as the mavis or throistle. And in connection with my performance I wish to state that I 'ave nothing whatsoever in my mouth. The effects which I produce . . ."

I withdrew, and two-thirds of the audience started to do the same. From behind us, dying away as the doors closed, came the plaintive note of the common thrush feebly competing with that other and sterner bird which haunts those places of entertainment where audiences are critical and swift to take offense.

Out in the street a knot of Shoreditch's younger set were hanging on the lips of an excited orator in a battered hat and trousers which had been made for a larger man. Some stirring tale which he was telling held them spellbound. Words came raggedly through the noise of the traffic.

"... like this. Then 'e 'its 'im another like that. Then they start . . . on the side of the jor . . ."

"Pass along, there!" interrupted an official voice. "Come on, there, pass along!"

The crowd thinned and resolved itself into its elements.

I found myself moving down the street in company with the wearer of the battered hat. Though we had not been formally introduced, he seemed to consider me a suitable recipient for his tale. He enrolled me at once as a nucleus for a fresh audience.

"'E comes up, this bloke does, just as Tod is goin' in at the stage door . . ."

"Tod?" I queried.

"Tod Bingham. 'E comes up just as 'e's goin' in at the stage door, and 'e says 'Ere!' and Tod says 'Yus?' and this bloke 'e says 'Put 'em up!' and Tod says 'Put wot up?' and this bloke says 'Yer 'ands,' and Tod says 'Wot, me?' sort of surprised. An' the next minute they're fightin' all over the shop . . ."

"But surely Tod Bingham was run over by a truck?"

The man in the battered hat surveyed me with the mingled scorn and resentment which the devout bestow on those of heretical views.

"Truck! 'E wasn't run over by no truck. Wot mikes yer fink 'e was run over by a truck? Wot 'ud 'e be doin' bein' run over by a truck? 'E 'ad it put



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THE first step towards attaining a healthy skin is right living—spending hours in wholesome outdoor activities, etc. But the second, and equally important, is *proper* cleansing. Your skin is like a delicate fabric—easily injured by rough scrubbing or the use of a harsh, caustic soap. Why run the risk of hurting it by using anything that happens to be handy, when you *know* that Resinol Soap protects it?

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across 'im by this red-headed bloke, same as I'm tellin' yer."

A great light shone upon me.

"Red-headed?" I cried.

"Yus."

"A big man?"

"Yus."

"And you say he put it across Tod Bingham?"

"Put it across 'im proper. 'Ad to go 'ome in a keb, Tod did. Funny a bloke that could fight like that bloke could fight 'adn't the sense to go and do it on the stige and get some money for it. That's wot I think."

Across the street an arc lamp shed its cold rays. And into its glare there strode a man draped in a yellow mackintosh.

Ukridge, the man with a genius for getting himself and his friends into tight places, does one of his choicest bits in July COSMOPOLITAN

The Hope of Happiness

(Continued from page 56)

couple of funerals—relations where I couldn't dodge the last sad rites. Cheerless, this death stuff; sort o' brings you up with a jerk when you think of it. Most of us these days are frantically trying to forget man's inevitable destiny by running as wild as we dare—blindfolded. It isn't fashionable to be serious about anything. I tell you, my boy, I could count on the fingers of one hand all the people I know who ever take a good square look at life."

"Oh, not as bad as that!" said Bruce, surprised at Henderson's unwonted earnestness. "There must be a lot of people who are troubled about the state of their souls—who have some sort of ideals but are ashamed to haul them out!"

"Ashamed is the word!" Henderson affirmed. "We're afraid of being kidded if anybody sneaks up on us and catches us admiring the Ten Commandments or practicing the Christian virtues! Now I know the rattle of all the skeletons in all the closets in this town. If they all took a notion to trot up and down our main thoroughfares some moonlit evening they'd make quite a parade. You understand I'm not sitting in judgment on my fellow man; I merely view him at times like this, when I'm addressing a man of intellect like you, with a certain cheerful detachment. And I see things going on—and I take part in them—that I deplore. I swear I deplore them; particularly," he went on with a grim smile, "on days when I'm suffering from hang-over-itis."

"You must have been on a roaring tear last night. You have all the symptoms."

"A cruel injustice! I'm never terribly wicked. I drink more than I need at times and I flirt occasionally to keep my hand in. Maybelle doesn't mind if I wander a little, but when she whistles I'm right back at my own fireside pretending nothing happened."

"I'll wager you do!" laughed Bruce.

"Right now," Henderson went on, "I can see a few people we both know who are bound to come a cropper if they don't mind their steps. There's Connie Mills. Not a bad sort, Connie, but a little bit too afraid she isn't having as much fun as she's entitled to. And Shep—the most high-minded, unselfish fellow I know—he, poor nut, just perishing for somebody to love him!"

"By the way, what sort of a chap's George Whitford?" Bruce asked.

"First class," Bud answered promptly. "A real fellow; about the best we've got. Something of the soldier of fortune about him. A variety of talents; brilliant streak

in him. Why do you ask? George getting on your preserves?"

"Lord, no! I was just wondering whether you'd knock him. I like him myself."

"Well, nearly everyone does. He appeals to the imagination. Just a little too keen about women, however, for his own good."

A buzzer sounded and Bruce went to the telephone by which visitors announced themselves from the hall below.

"Mr. Carroll? Certainly; come right up!"

"Carroll? Didn't know you were so chummy with him," Henderson grumbled, not pleased by the interruption.

"I run into him at the club occasionally. He's been threatening to drop in some evening. Seems to be a nice chap."

"Oh, yes, Carroll's all right!" Bud grinned. "We might proceed with our discussion of the Millses. Arthur ought to know a few merry facts not disclosed to the general public. He wears the mask of meekness, but that's purely secretarial, so to speak."

Carroll, having reached the apartment, at once began bantering Henderson about the Plantagenet Bud had lately sold him.

"I'm glad you came in," said Bruce. "Bud's conscience is hurting him; he's moaning over the general depravity of the world."

"Nothing original in that. Everybody's talking that stuff," said Carroll, taking a cigar from the box Bruce offered. He manifested a polite interest in the apartment and said he hoped Bruce was liking the town. "We want newcomers to feel at home. When a new man shows up we like to think he's here for life."

Carroll, Bruce knew, was a popular man in town, no doubt deriving special consideration from his association with Mills. His name was written into local history almost as far back as that of the Mills family. In giving up the law to become Mills's right-hand man it was assumed that he had done so merely for the benefit to be derived from contact with a man of Mills's large interests. In time it was believed that he would return to the law, which he had abandoned to go into Mills's office. He dabbled somewhat in politics, possibly, it was said, that he might be in a position to serve Mills when necessary in frustrating the evil designs of the State or the municipal government upon Mills's interests.

Bruce had wondered a little when Carroll intimated his purpose to look him up; he had even speculated as to whether Mills

The light gleamed on his pince-nez and lent a gruesome pallor to his set face. It was Ukridge retreating from Moscow.

"Others," I said, "are thinking the same."

And I hurried across the road to administer what feeble consolation I might.

There are moments when a fellow needs a friend.

COSMOPOLITAN

might not have prompted this demonstration of friendliness for some purpose of his own. It was maddening that he was unable to turn in any direction without running into Mills or someone close to him. But Carroll bore all the marks of a gentleman; he was socially in demand and it was grossly ungenerous to think that his call had any motive beyond a wish to be courteous to a new member of the community.

Carroll was tall and slender, with light brown hair and deep-set blue eyes. His clean-shaven face was rather deeply lined for a man of his years; there was something of the air of a student about him. But when he spoke it was in the crisp incisive tones of an executive. A second glance at his eyes discovered hints of reserve strength. Serving an exacting man had not destroyed his independence and self-respect. On the whole a person who knew what he was about, endowed with brains and not easily to be trampled upon or driven.

"You mustn't let Bud fool you about our home town. Most anything he says is bound to be wrong; it's temperamental with him. But you know him of old; I needn't tell you what a scoundrel he is."

"Certainly not! You can't room with a man for four years without knowing all his weaknesses."

"Yes; I certainly know all yours," Henderson retorted. "But he isn't a bad fellow, Arthur. We must marry him off and settle him in life. I already see several good chances to plant him."

"You'd better let Maybelle do that," replied Carroll. "Your judgment in such delicate matters can't be trusted."

"Perhaps I'd better leave the room while you make a choice for me," said Bruce.

"What would you think of Leila Mills as a fitting mate for him?" asked Henderson.

"Excellent," Carroll affirmed. "It's about time Leila was married. You've met Miss Mills, haven't you, Storrs?"

"Yes; several times," said Bruce, wholly uncomfortable that the talk was verging again toward the Mills family. He suspected Bud of turning the conversation upon Leila merely to gratify his passion for gossip.

"Of course you've got the first call, Arthur," said Henderson with cheerful impudence. "The town is getting impatient waiting for you to show your hand."

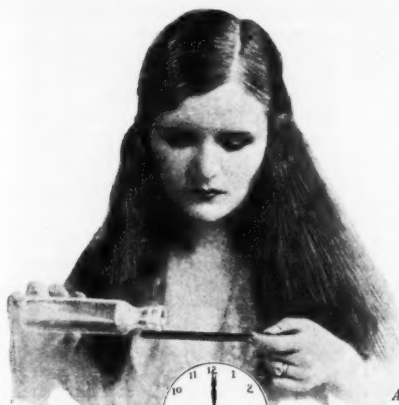
"I'm sorry to keep my fellow citizens waiting," Carroll replied. "Of course there's always Miss Mills's own wishes to consider."

"Oh well, there is that! Bruce, with his

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Just a few drops combed into the hair and almost immediately you can see "listless locks" begin to take on new life, new lustre, new silky sheen—stray ends and straggly strands molding into glorious waves and curls.



And in 20 minutes

your mirror shows you a new head of hair—marcelled and curled as you like it best; with a natural wave that no artificial beauty-parlor process could possibly duplicate.



Marvelous New Spanish Liquid Makes any hair naturally curly in 20 minutes

The Spanish Beggar's Priceless Gift

by Winnifred Ralston

FROM the day we started to school, Charity Winthrop and I were called the touseled-hair twins.

Our mothers despaired of us. Our hair simply wouldn't behave.

As we grew older the hated name still clung to us. It followed us through the grades and into boarding school. Then Charity's family moved to Spain and I didn't see her again until last New Year's eve.

A party of us had gone to the Drake Hotel for dinner that night. As usual I was terribly embarrassed and ashamed of my hair.

Horribly self-conscious I was sitting at the table, scarcely touching my food, wishing I were home. It seemed that everyone had wonderful, lustrous, curly hair but me and I felt they were all laughing or worse, pitying me behind my back.

My eyes strayed to the dance floor and there I saw a beautiful girl dancing with Tom Harvey. Her eye caught mine and to my surprise she smiled and started toward me.

About this girl's face was a halo of golden curls. I think she had the most beautiful hair I ever saw. My face must have turned scarlet as I compared it mentally with my own straggly, ugly mop.

Of course you have guessed her identity—Charity Winthrop who once had dull straight hair like mine.

It had been five long years since I had seen her. But I simply couldn't wait. I blurted out—"Charity Winthrop—tell me—what miracle has happened to your hair?"

She smiled and said mysteriously, "Come to my room and I will tell you the whole story."

Charity tells of the beggar's gift

"Our house in Madrid faced a little, old plaza where I often strolled after my siesta.



A Matchless Marcelle



Lovely Curls

"Miguel, the beggar, always occupied the end bench of the south end of the plaza. I always dropped a few centavos in his hat when I passed and he soon grew to know me.

"The day before I left Madrid I stopped to bid him goodby and pressed a gold coin in his palm."

"Hija mía," he said, "You have been very kind to an old man. Dígamelos (tell me) *senorita*, what it is your heart most desires."

"I laughed at the idea, then said jokingly, 'Miguel, my hair is straight and dull. I would have it lustrous and curly.'"

"Dígamelos, *senorita*," he said—"Many years ago—a Castilian prince was wedded to a Moorish beauty. Her hair was black as a raven's wing and straight as an arrow. Like you, this lady wanted *los pelos rizos* (curly hair). Her husband offered thousands of *pesos* to the man who would fulfill her wish. The prize fell to Pedro, the *droguero*. Out of roots and herbs he brewed a potion that converted the princess' straight, unruly hair into a glorious mass of ringlet curls.

"Pedro, son of the son of Pedro, has that secret today. Years ago I did him a great service. Here you will find him, go to him and tell your wish."

"I called a *coche* and gave the driver the address Miguel had given me.

"At the door of the apothecary shop, a funny old hawk-nosed Spaniard met me. I stammered out my explanation. When I finished, he bowed and vanished into his store. Presently he returned and handed me a bottle.

"Terribly excited—I could hardly wait until I reached home. When I was in my room alone, I took down my hair and applied the liquid as directed. In twenty minutes, not one second more, the transformation, which you have noted, had taken place.

"Come, Winnifred—apply it to your own hair and see what it can do for you."

Twenty minutes later as I looked into Charity's mirror I could hardly believe my eyes. The impossible had happened. My dull, straight hair had wound itself into curling tendrils. My head was a mass of ringlets and waves. It shone with a lustre it never had before.

You can imagine the amazement of the others in the party when I returned to the ballroom. Everybody noticed the change. Never did I have such a glorious night. I was popular. Men clustered about me. I had never been so happy.

The next morning when I awoke, I hardly dared look in my mirror fearing it had all been a dream. But it was true—gloriously true. My hair was curly and beautiful.

I asked Charity's permission to take a sample of the Spanish liquid to my cousin at the Century Laboratories. For days he worked, analyzing the liquid. Finally, he solved the problem, isolated the two Spanish herbs, the important ingredients.

They experimented on fifty women and the results were simply astounding. Now the Century Chemists are prepared to supply the wonderful Spanish Curling liquid to women everywhere.

Take advantage of their generous trial offer—

I told my cousin I did not want one penny for the information I had given him. I did make one stipulation, however. I insisted that he introduce the discovery by selling it for a limited time at actual laboratory cost plus postage so that as many women as possible could take advantage of it. This he agreed to do.

No need to undergo the torture and expense of the so-called permanent wave, which might even destroy your hair. You can have natural curly hair in twenty minutes. One application will keep your hair beautiful for a week or more.

Don't delay another day. For the Century Chemists guarantee satisfaction or refund your money.

No Profit Distribution of \$3.50 Bottles

(ONLY ONE TO A FAMILY)

We are offering for a limited time only, no-profit distribution of the regular \$3.50 size of our Spanish Curling Liquid.

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You do not have to send one penny in advance. Merely fill out the coupon below—then pay the postman \$1.87 plus the few cents postage, when he delivers the liquid. If you are not satisfied in every way, even this low laboratory fee will be refunded promptly. This opportunity may never appear again. Miss Ralston urges that you take advantage of it at once.

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known affection for the arts, may prefer the lovely Millicent. He's not worth troubling about as a competitor. Well, I must skip back to Maybelle! Wait till I get downstairs before you begin knocking me!"

"Don't be in a rush," said Bruce.

"Oh, I'll go now!" said Bud as he lounged out. "I want you to have plenty of time to skin me properly!"

"Bud's a mighty good fellow," said Carroll when they were alone. "He and Maybelle give a real tang to our social affairs. I suppose we have Bud to thank for bringing you here."

"Oh, not altogether!" said Bruce. "I was alone in the world and my home town hasn't much to offer an architect."

"Your profession does need room. I was born right here and expect to be buried among my ancestors. Let me see—did I hear that you're from the East?"

The question on its face was courteously perfunctory; Mills would certainly not have done anything so clumsy, Bruce reflected, as to send Carroll to probe into his history.

"I'm an Ohioan—born in Laconia," he replied.

"Not really! I have an uncle and some cousins there. Just today we had a letter at the office from Laconia, an inquiry about a snarl in the title to some property. Mr. Mills's father—of the same name—once had some interests there—a stove factory, I think it was. Long before your day, of course. He bought some land near the plant—the Millses have always gone in strong for real estate—thinking he might need it if the business developed. Mr. Mills was there awhile as a young man. Suppose he didn't like the business, and his father sold out. I was there a few years ago visiting my relations and I met some Bruces—Miss Carolyn Bruce—awfully jolly girl—related to you?"

"My cousin. Bruce was my mother's name."

"The old saying about the smallness of the world! Splendid girl—not married yet?"

"Not when I heard from her last week." "We might drive over there sometime next spring and see her."

"Fine. Carolyn was always a great pal of mine. Laconia's a sociable town. Everybody knows everybody else; it was like a big family. We can't laugh so gaily at the small towns; they've got a lot that's mighty fine. Our social and political regeneration has got to begin with the small units."

"I say that sometimes to Mr. Mills," Carroll continued. "But he's of the old ultra-conservative school; a pessimist as to the future, or pretends to be. He really sees most things pretty straight. But men of his sort hate the idea of change. They prefer things as they are."

"I think we all want the changes to come slowly—gradual evolution socially and politically," Bruce ventured. "That's the only safe way. The great business of the world is to find happiness—get rid of misery and violence and hatred. I'm for everything that moves toward that end."

"I'm with you there," Carroll replied quickly.

Bruce's liking for Carroll increased. Mills's secretary was not only an agreeable

companion but he expressed views on many questions that showed knowledge and sound reasoning. He referred to Mills now and then, always with respect but never with any trace of subservience. Bruce, now that his fear had passed, was deriving a degree of courage merely from talking with Carroll. Carroll, in daily contact with Mills, evidently was not afraid of him. And what had he, Bruce Storrs, to fear from Franklin Mills? There could not have been any scandal about Mills's affair with his mother or she herself would probably have mentioned it; or more likely she would never have told him her story. Carroll's visit was reassuring every way Bruce considered it.

"I got a glimpse of you at Deer Trail the other day. You were there about the superintendent's house—Mr. Mills spoke of you afterward—said you seemed to know your business. He's not so hard to please as many people think—only"—Carroll smiled—"it's always safer to do things his way."

"I imagine it is!" Bruce assented.

Carroll remained until the clock on the mantel chimed twelve.

"I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have!" he said. "If there's anything I can do for you give me a ring. Mr. Mills is a regular client of Freeman's. We'll doubtless meet in a business way from time to time."

CHAPTER VII

ON THE following Sunday afternoon Bruce, having been reproved by Dale Freeman for his recent neglect of her, drove to the architect's house. He had hoped to find Millicent there and was disappointed not to find her.

"You expected to see someone in particular!" said Dale. "I can tell by the roving look in your eye."

"I was merely resenting the presence of these other people. My eyes are for you alone!"

"What a satisfactory boy you are! But it was Millicent, wasn't it?"

"Lady, lady! You're positively psychic! Do you also tell fortunes?"

"It's easy to tell yours! I see a beautiful blonde in your life! Sorry I can't produce Millie today. She's not crazy about my Sunday parties; she hates a crowd. I must arrange something small for you two. You must meet that girl who just came in alone—the one in the enchanting black gown. She's a Miss Abrams, a Jewess, very cultivated—lovely voice."

The rooms were soon crowded. Bruce was still talking to Miss Abrams when he caught sight of Shepherd and Constance Mills, who had drifted in with Fred Thomas. A young man with a flowing tie and melancholy dark eyes claimed Miss Abrams's attention and Bruce turned to find Shepherd at his elbow.

"Just the man I wanted to see!" exclaimed Shepherd. "Let's find a place where we can talk."

"Not so easy to find!" said Bruce. However, he led the way to Freeman's den, which had not been invaded, wondering what Franklin Mills's son could have to say to him.

"Do pardon me for cornering you this way," Shepherd began. "I looked for you several days at the club but you didn't show up."

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"I've been too busy to go up there for luncheon" Bruce replied. "You could always get track of me at the office."

"Yes, but this was—is—rather confidential for the present." Shepherd, clasping and unclasping his hands in an attempt to gain composure, now bent forward in his chair and addressed Bruce with a businesslike air. "What I want to talk to you about is that clubhouse for our workmen. You know I mentioned it some time ago?"

"Yes; I remember," Bruce replied, surprised that Shepherd still had the matter on his mind.

"It's troubled me a good deal," said Shepherd, with the earnestness that always increased his stammering. "I've felt that there's a duty—a real duty and an opportunity there. You know how it is when you get a thing in your head you can't get rid of—can't argue yourself out of?"

"Those perplexities are annoying. I'd assumed that you'd given the thing up."

"Well, I thought I had! But I'm determined now to go on. That neighborhood is so isolated—the people have no amusements unless they come to town. I'd like to go ahead so they can have some use of the house this winter."

Bruce nodded his sympathy with the idea.

"Now since I talked with you I've found some pictures of such houses. I've got 'em here." He drew from his pocket some pages torn from magazines. "I think we might spend a little more money than I thought at first would be available. We might go forty thousand to get about what's in this house I've marked with a pencil."

Bruce scrutinized the pictures and glanced over the explanatory text.

"The idea seems to be well worked out. There are many such clubhouses scattered over the country. You'd want the reading room and the play room for children and all those features?"

"Yes; and I like the idea of a comfortable sitting room where the women can gather and do their sewing and that sort of thing. And I'd like you to do this for me—begin getting up the plans right away."

Shepherd's tone was eager; his eyes were bright with excitement.

"But, Mr. Mills, I can hardly do that! After all I'm really only a subordinate in Mr. Freeman's office. It would be hardly square for me to take the commission—at least not without his consent."

Shepherd, who had not thought of this, frowned in his perplexity. Since his talk with Constance he had been anxious to get the work started before his father heard of it; and he had been hoping to run into Bruce somewhere to avoid visiting Freeman's office. He felt that if he had an architect who sympathized with the idea everything would be simplified. His father and Freeman met frequently, and Freeman, blunt and direct, was not a man who would connive at the construction of a building, in which presumably Franklin Mills was interested, without Mills's knowledge.

His sensitive face so clearly indicated his disappointment that Bruce, not knowing what lay behind this unexpected revival of the clubhouse plan, said, with every wish to be kind:

"Very likely Mr. Freeman would be glad to let me do the work—but I'd rather you



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asked him. I'd hate to have him think I was going behind his back to take a job. You can understand how I'd feel about it."

"I hadn't thought of that at all!" said Shepherd sincerely. "And of course I respect your feeling." Then with a little toss of the head and a gesture that expressed his desire to be entirely frank, he added: "You understand I'm doing this on my own hook. I think I told you my father thought it unwise for the battery company to do it. But I'm going ahead on my own responsibility—with my own money."

"I see," said Bruce. "It's fine of you to want to do it."

"I've got to do it!" said Shepherd, slapping his hand on his knee. "And of course my father and the company being out of it, it's no one's concern but my own!"

The door was open. Connie Mills's laugh for a moment rose above the blur of talk in the adjoining rooms. Shepherd's head lifted and his lips tightened as though he gained confidence from his wife's propinquity. Mrs. Freeman appeared at the door, demanding to know if they wanted tea, and noting their absorption withdrew without waiting for an answer.

It was clear enough that Shepherd meant to put the scheme through without his father's consent, even in defiance of his wishes. The idea had become an obsession with the young man; but his sincere wish to promote the comfort and happiness of his employees spoke for so kind and generous a nature that Bruce shrank from wounding him.

Seeing Bruce hesitate, Shepherd began to explain the sale of his trust stock to obtain the money, which only increased Bruce's determination to have nothing to do with the matter.

"Why don't you take it up with Mr. Carroll?" Bruce suggested. "He might win your father over to your side."

"Oh, I couldn't do that! Carroll, you know, is bound to take father's view of things. Father will be all right about it when it's all done. Of course after the work starts he'll know, so it won't be a secret long. I'm going ahead as a little joke on him. I think he'll be tickled to know I've got so much initiative."

He laughed in his quick, eager way, hoping that he had made this convincing. Bruce, from his observation of Franklin Mills, was not so sanguine as to the outcome. Mills would undoubtedly be very angry. On the face of it he would have a right to be. And one instinctively felt like shielding Shepherd Mills from acts of folly.

"If you really want my advice," said Bruce after a moment's deliberation, "I'd take a little more time to this. Before you could get your plans we'll be having rough weather. I'd wait till spring, when you can develop your grounds and complete the whole thing at once. And it would be just as well to look around a bit—visit other cities and get the newest ideas."

"You think that? I supposed there'd be time to get the foundations in if I started right away."

"I wouldn't risk it; in fact I think it would be a serious mistake."

"Well, you are probably right," assented Shepherd, though reluctantly, and there was a plaintive note in his voice. "Thanks ever so much. I guess I'll take

your advice. I'll let it go till spring."

"Damon and Pythias couldn't look more brotherly!" Constance Mills stood at the doorway viewing them with her languid smile. "It peevies me a good deal, Mr. Storrs, that you prefer my husband's society to mine."

"This is business, Connie," Shepherd said. "We've just finished."

"Let's say the party is just beginning," said Bruce. "I was just coming out to look you up."

"I can't believe it! But Leila just telephoned for us to come out to Deer Trail and bring any of Dale's crowd who look amusing. That includes you, of course, Mr. Storrs. Everyone's gone but Helen Torrence and Fred Thomas and Arthur Carroll. Mr. Mills is at the farm; it's a fad of his to have Sunday supper in the country. Leila hates it and sent out an S. O. S., so we can't desert her. No, Mr. Storrs, you can't duck! Millicent is there—that may add to the attractions!"

This with a meaningful glance at Bruce prompted him to say that Miss Harden's presence hardly diminished the attractions of the farm. There was real comedy in his inability to extricate himself from the net in which he constantly found himself enmeshed with the members of the house of Mills.

In discussing who had a car and who hadn't Freeman said his machine was working badly, to which Shepherd replied that there was plenty of room in his limousine for the Freemans and any others who were careless.

"Mr. Storrs will want to take his car," said Constance. "He oughtn't really to drive out alone—"

"Not alone, certainly not!" said Bruce. "I shall be honored if you will drive with me!"

II

"You didn't mind?" asked Constance when Bruce got his car under way.

"You mean do I mind driving you out? Please don't make me say how great the pleasure is!"

"You're poking fun at me; you always do!"

"Never! Why, if I followed my inclinations I'd come trotting up to your house every day. But it wouldn't do. You know that!"

"But I wouldn't want you to do that—not unless you—"

There was a bridge to cross and the pressure of traffic at the moment called for care in negotiating it.

"What were you saying?" he asked as they turned off the brilliantly lighted boulevard. The town lay behind and they moved through open country.

"You know," she said, "I gave you the sign that I wanted to be friends. I had a feeling you knew I needed—"

"What?" he demanded, curious as to the development of her technic.

"Oh, just a little attention! I've tried in every way to tell you that I'm horribly lonely."

"But you oughtn't to be!" he said, vaguely conscious that they were repeating themselves.

"Oh, I know what you think! You think I ought to be very content and happy. But happiness isn't so easy! We don't get it just by wishing."

"I suppose world to find

It was no brilliant in of reckless coat, with Constance beguiling lonely road evident with Franklin M party had tion that harmless particular in-law was ready to m

"It's str bit afraid when the with Leila You have Shep picks you, for trying to t

"Oh, cor I might h purely pr And your the rest of and out c home."

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"That's good opin say!"

"Oh, I s able and unpleasant her indolence say anything low a tone to bend touched thrillingly

"It seem this way, destination on—"

"That v gas held o

"You ree "I seem to you! act and w

"But I'm many thin

"Such a "There' lingering u necessary lifted her eyes mee

"I suppose it's the hardest thing in the world to find," he assented.

It was now quite dark and the stars hung brilliant in the cloudless heavens. A mood of recklessness was upon him. In her fur coat, with a smart toque to match, Constance had not before seemed so beguiling. His meeting with her in the lonely road with George Whitford and her evident wish not to be seen that day by Franklin Mills or the members of his riding party had rather shaken his first assumption that she could be classified as a harmless flirt. Tonight he didn't care particularly. If Franklin Mills's daughter-in-law wanted to flirt with him he was ready to meet her halfway . . .

"It's strange, but you know I'm not a bit afraid of you. And the other evening when the rest of us couldn't do a thing with Leila she chose you to take her home. You have a way of inspiring confidence. She picks you out, when he hardly knows you, for confidential talks. I've been trying to analyze your—fascinations."

"Oh, come now! Your husband thought I might help him in a small perplexity—purely professional. Nothing to that! And your young sister-in-law was cross at the rest of you that day at Mrs. Torrence's and out of pique chose me to take her home."

"But I trust you!"

"Maybe you shouldn't!"

"Well, that afternoon you caught me out here with Mr. Whitford I knew you wouldn't tell on me. George was a trifle nervous about it. I told him you were the soul of discretion."

"But—I didn't see you! I didn't see you at all! I'm blind in both eyes and I can be deaf and dumb when necessary!"

"Oh, I knew you wouldn't rush over town telling on me! It's really not that! It's because I knew you wouldn't that I'm wondering what—*what*—it is that makes even your acquaintances feel that they can rely on you. You know you're quite a wonderful person. Leila and Millicent were talking about you only yesterday. Not schoolgirl twaddle, but real appreciation!"

"That's consoling! I'm glad of their good opinion. But you—what did you say!"

"Oh, I said I thought you were disagreeable and conceited and generally unpleasant!" She turned toward him with her indolent laugh. "You *know* I wouldn't say anything unkind of you." This in so low a tone that it was necessary for him to bend his head to hear. His cheek touched the furry edge of her hat thrillingly.

"It seems strange, our being together this way," she said. "I wish we hadn't a destination. I'd like to go right on—and on—"

"That would be all right as long as the gas held out!"

"You refuse to take me seriously!"

"I seem doomed to say the wrong thing to you! You'll have to teach me how to act and what to say."

"But I'd rather be the pupil! There are many things you could teach me!"

"Such as—"

"There's always love!" she replied softly, lingering upon the word; and again it was necessary to bend down to hear. She lifted her face; he felt rather than saw her eyes meeting his. Her breath, for a



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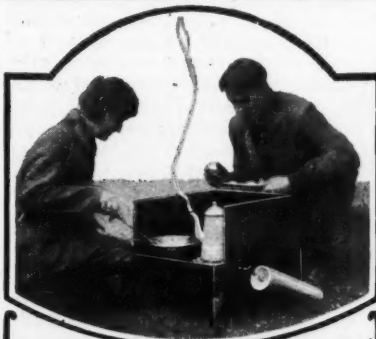


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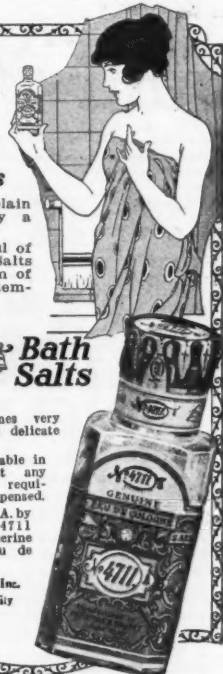
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fleeting instant on his cheek, caused him to give hurried consideration to the ancient question whether a woman who is willing should be kissed, or whether delicate ethical questions should outweigh the desirability of the kiss prospective. He kissed her—first tentatively on the cheek and then more ardently on the lips. She made no protest; he offered no apology. Both were silent for some time.

When she spoke it was to say, with serene irrelevance:

"How smoothly your car runs! It increases my respect for the Plantagenet."

"Oh, it's very satisfactory; some of Bud's claims for it are really true!"

Bruce was relieved; but he was equally perplexed. It was an ungallant assumption that any man might, in like circumstances, kiss Constance Mills. On the other hand it eased his conscience to find that she evidently thought so little of it. She had been quite willing to be kissed . . . She was a puzzling person, this young woman.

III

THE Freemans and the others who had started with them had taken short cuts and were already at the house. They passed through an entry hall into a big square living room with a balcony running round the second floor. It was a fit residence for the owner of the encompassing acres. Bruce felt the presence of Franklin Mills before he saw him. This was the kind of thing Mills would like. The house was in keeping with the fertile land, the prize herds, the high-bred horses with which he amused himself. Mills, leaving the group gathered about the open fire, welcomed the newcomers with something akin to a bluff heartiness, as though consciously or unconsciously he adopted a different tone in the country and wished to appear the unobtrusive but hospitable lord of the manor. Leila joined him as he talked a moment to Constance and Bruce.

"You see you can't dodge me! Awfully glad you came. Millie's here somewhere, and I think old Bud Henderson will drop in later."

"There'll be supper pretty soon," said Mills. "We're just waiting for everybody to get here. I think you know everyone. It's a pleasure to see you here, Mr. Storrs. Please make yourself at home. Constance, see that Mr. Storrs has a cocktail."

The members of the company gathered about the fire began twitting Constance and Bruce about the length of time it had taken them to drive out. They demanded to know what Connie had talked to him about. He answered them in kind, appealing to Constance to confirm his assertion that they had taken the most expeditious route. They had discussed the political conditions in Poland, he declared.

"Come with me," said Mrs. Torrence, drawing him away. "I want to talk to you! I don't want you to get the idea that my house is a place where I pull nothing but rough parties! Please think better of me than that!"

"Heavens, woman! Such a thought never entered my head! I've been thinking seriously of coming back! I need some more of your spiritual uplift!"

"Good! There's more of that Bourbon! But I wanted to say that I was sorry Leila came to my house as she did. That is a

problem—not a serious problem, but the child needs a little curbing. She has one good friend—Millicent Harden—that tall, lovely girl standing over there—do you know her?"

"Oh, yes; I've even played golf with her!"

"My! You really have an eye! Well, you might come to call on me! I'm a trifle old to be a good playmate for you; but you might take me on as a sort of aunt—not too old to be unsympathetic with youth. When nothing better offers, look me up!"

"I'd been thinking seriously of falling in love with you! Nothing is holding me back but my natural diffidence!"

She raised her hand warningly.

"Go no further! I can see that you've been well trained. But it isn't necessary to jolly me. I'm not half the fool I look. My self-respect didn't want you to get the idea that I'm a wild woman. I was worried that evening about Leila—she has a heart of gold but I don't dare take any special interest in her for the absurd reason—what do you think!—I've been suspected of having designs on—our host!"

She laughed until her face was scarlet. Her mirth was of the infectious sort; Bruce laughed with her; one had to, even when the provocation was slight.

"One doesn't talk of one's host," she said with a deep sigh, "but I was talked about enough when I married Mr. Torrence; I'll never try it again. But why am I taking you into my confidence? Merely that I want you to know my house isn't a booze shop all the time! I'm going to keep my eye on you. If I see you wandering too close to the rifle pits, I'll warn you! May I?"

"Of course you may!" said Bruce, conscious of an honest friendliness in this proffer, but not at once finding words to express his appreciation.

"Tell me, do I look as though I might be gassed?" he asked her.

"I don't know whether you're susceptible or not. But I like you! I'm going to prove it by doing you a favor. Come with me!"

The supper was a buffet affair and a colored butler was distributing plates and napkins. At one side of the room Franklin Mills was talking to Millicent. Bruce had glanced at them occasionally, thinking with a twinge how young Mills looked tonight, noting how easily he seemed to be holding the girl's interest, not as a man much older but as a contemporary. And he had everything to offer—his unassailable social position and the wealth to support it. As he crossed the room beside Mrs. Torrence, accommodating his long stride to her funny little pattering step, he saw a frown write itself fleetingly on Mills's brow. Millicent—in a soft blue Jersey sport dress, with a felt hat of the same shade adorned with a brilliant pheasant's wing—kept her eyes upon Mills until he had finished something he was saying.

"What's it all about?" demanded Mrs. Torrence, laying her hand upon Millicent's arm. "We knew you two were talking of something confidential and important; that's why we're interrupting you."

"Oh, we're discussing the horrors of Sunday—and whether it should be abolished!" said Millicent. "And Mr. Mills won't be serious!"

"Sunday Mrs. Torrence trying to do or stay at home?"

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"But yo you—"

"Millicent Well, I."

"demanded Bad!"

"Sunday's always a hard day," remarked Mrs. Torrence. "I'm always worn out trying to decide whether to go to church or stay at home."

"And today?" asked Mills.

"I went! The sermon was most disagreeable. Doctor Lindley told us we all know our duty to God and can't pretend that we don't!"

"Is that what he preached?" asked Mills with a vague smile. "What do you think of the proposition?"

"The man's right! But it doesn't make me any happier to know it," Mrs. Torrence replied. "Next Sunday I'll stay in bed." She took Mills away for the avowed purpose of asking his private counsel in spiritual matters.

"Isn't she nice?" said Millicent.

"I'm bound to think so; she arranged this for me!"

"Did she?" asked Millicent with feigned innocence. "She did it neatly!"

"She promised to be my friend and then proved it," Bruce said and then added, "I'm not so sure our host quite liked being taken away."

"How foolish of you! He can always see me!" she replied indifferently. He thought she had not liked his remark.

Suddenly he hated Mills. His jealousy gave him a swift glimpse of Millicent as Mills's wife, presiding over his home, proud of the position he would be able to give her and ministering to his happiness. The old agony was again resurgent. Mills had no right to the love, even to the respect of a girl like Millicent Harden. His reckless mood of an hour ago was gone. He was ashamed of himself for having kissed Constance Mills; the shame was intensified now that he was with Millicent, touched by her sweetness and purity, reassured by her kindness.

"Don't scorn your food!" said Millicent, noting his abstraction. "It is of an exceeding goodness. Bring me up to date a little about yourself. Any more dark days?"

"No-o-o."

She laughed merrily at the prolongation of his denial.

"Come now! I'm beginning to think I'm of no use to you!"

"Right now I'm as happy as a little lark!" he declared.

She had begun to suspect that he had known unhappiness. A love affair, perhaps. Or it might have been the war that had taken something of the buoyancy of youth out of him. She was happy in the thought that she was able to help him. He was particularly responsive to a kind of humor she herself enjoyed, and they vied with each other in whimsical ridicule of the cubists in art and the symbolists in literature.

The guests were redistributing themselves and she suggested that he single out Leila for a little attention.

"Don't have prejudices! There's nothing in that," she said.

"I haven't a prejudice against Miss Mills!"

"Not so formal when you mention her! I'll give you permission to call her Leila! She'll like it!"

"But you haven't told me I might call you—"

"Millicent let it be!"

"Well, little one, how's your behavior?" demanded Leila when Bruce found her.

"Bad!" Bruce replied in her own key.

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"My example, I suppose. I've heard that I'm a bad influence in the community. Let's sit. You and I have got to have an understanding some day; why not now?"

"All right, but don't get too deep—Leila!"

"That's good! I didn't suppose you knew my name. Millie's put you up to that."

"She did. I hope you like it."

"Intensely! Are you falling in love with Millie?"

"That's a secret. If I said I was what would you say?"

"Atta boy! But—I don't think she is in love with you."

"Your penetration does you credit! I had thought of her as perishing for the hour when I would again dawn upon her sight!"

"You're going good! Really, though, she admits that she likes you ever so much."

"Is that the reason why you think she doesn't love me?"

"Of course! I'm in love myself. I'm simply wild about Freddy Thomas! But I'd die first before I'd admit the awful fact to even my dearest friend! That's love!"

"How about Freddy? Are you considering his feelings?"

"That's the wonderful part! You see, it's a secret. No one knows it but just Freddy and me!"

"Oh, I see! You pretend to hate Freddy and really you love him?"

"You're a thinker! What would you say if I told you I had a cute little flask upstairs and asked you to meet me in the pantry and have a little nip just to celebrate this event? I had only one cocktail; my cautious dada saw to that!"

"I'd meet you in the pantry and confiscate the flask!"

She regarded him fixedly for a moment and said with a bewilderingly swift change of manner:

"You know about life, people, things; I know you do! It's in your eyes and I'd know it if Millie hadn't said so. Do you really think it disgraceful for me to get—well, soused—as you've seen me several times? Dada and my aunts lecture me to death—and I hate it—but, well—what do you think?"

Her serious face demanded kindness. He felt infinitely older; she seemed very like a child tonight—an impulsive, friendly child.

"I think I'd cut it out. There's no good in it—for you or anyone else."

"I'll consider that!" she said gravely; then suddenly restless she suggested that they go into the long enclosed veranda that connected the house with the conservatories.

As they walked back and forth—Leila in frivolous humor now—Bruce caught a glimpse of her father and Millicent just inside the conservatory door. They were talking earnestly. Evidently they had paused to conclude some matter they had been discussing.

Millicent held three roses in her hand

and lifted them occasionally to her face.

Still beset by uncertainties as to whether he would increase his chances of happiness by marrying again, Mills was wondering just how a man of his years could initiate a courtship with a girl of Millicent's age. It must be managed in such a way as to preserve his dignity—that at all hazards must be maintained inviolable.

They had been walking through the conservatory aisles inspecting his roses, which were cultivated by an expert whose salary was a large item of the farm expense. He had decided that it would be folly to attempt his wooing in the manner of youth; it was on her serious side that she was most likely to be approachable. Mrs. Torrence's comments on Doctor Lindley's sermon had interested him. He wondered whether his recent talk with the clergyman was responsible for the plain speech of which Mrs. Torrence had complained . . .

Millicent was asking questions about the development of new floral types and he was answering painstakingly, pleased by her interest.

"It's unfortunate that the human species can't be improved as easily. At least we don't see our way to improving it," he remarked.

He had never thought her so beautiful as now; her charm was rather enhanced by her informal dress. It would be quite possible for him to love her, love her even with a young man's ardor.

"Oh, patience, sir!" she smiled. "Evolution is still going on."

"Or going back! There's our old quarrel!" he laughed. "We always seem to get into it. But your idea that we're not creatures of chance—that there's some unseen power back of everything we call life—that's too much for me. I can understand Darwin—but you!"

"Honestly, now, are you perfectly satisfied to go on thinking we're all creatures of chance?"

"Sometimes I am and then again I'm not!" he replied with a shrug. "I can't quite understand why it is that with everything we have, money and the ability to amuse ourselves, we do at times inquire about that Something that never shows itself or gives us a word."

"Oh, but He does!" She held up the three perfect roses Mills had plucked for her. "He shows Himself in all beautiful things, and they're all trying to tell us that the Something we can't see or touch has a great deal to do with our lives."

"Millie," he said in a tone of mock despair, tapping her hand lightly, "you're an incorrigible mystic!"

They were interrupted by a knock on the glass door, which swung open, disclosing Leila and Bruce.

"Mr. Storrs and I are dying of curiosity! You've been talking here for ages!" cried Leila.

"Millie's been amusing herself at my expense," said Mills. "Mr. Storrs, I wish you'd tell me sometime what Miss Harden means when she reaches into the infinite and brings down—"

"Roses!" laughed Millicent.

In handling the strange scene between Bruce and his father—in July COSMOPOLITAN—Meredith Nicholson makes you realize why he is one of the greatest living novelists

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(Continued from page 85)

morning and do not make any appearance until I send for you. A good deal will depend on whether or not there is any hitch in my plans anywhere along the line. Mr. Halliday will, of course, occupy your husband's rooms, but no one expects you to see any more of him than you did of Neil, which hasn't been an awful lot the last couple of years."

Sheila efaced herself wearily. Friedman, who knew the house well, led Halliday to the wing lately occupied by the master, a bedroom, bath and a dressing room that had also the appurtenances of a den.

"This is your parking space, young fellow. You can probably find some of Neil's clothes that will fit you well enough until you can get some others made. What I want now is every stitch you have on and your papers. Taking off your clothes is your last official act as Harrison Halliday. From now on even I am going to try to think you're Neil Keeley. You're a good actor. I've watched you on the lot. See if you can fool me."

The telephone at Halliday's bedside rang at ten the next morning. He answered it himself, slightly dazed. He had been asleep only a couple of hours.

"Who is this?" demanded a voice—male. "Harri—wait a minute." He altered his voice pitch a trifle. "Mr. Keeley talking."

"Good boy," applauded Sol Friedman. "Sorry if I got you out of bed, Neil, but I wanted to tell you that I am suspending work at the studio today on account of the death, last night, of young Harrison Halliday—"

"Halliday? Halliday?" "You may not know him by name, Neil, but he's the man who doubled for you in some of the scenes where we didn't dare take any chances of your getting hurt."

"Yes, yes, I remember now. How did it happen?"

"Drunk, I guess. Car overturned and crushed him. Would scarcely have been able to make positive identification except for papers in his pockets. He doesn't seem to have any friends or relatives out here, and as soon as the coroner gives us a verdict I'm going to handle the funeral arrangements myself. Tomorrow morning, probably."

"Is there anything I can do?" "No, not a thing. I was going to suggest that you spend the day out in the country somewhere, up in the hills or down at the beach. You'll find your car out in front of the house right where you left it last night. You forgot to put it in the garage, I noticed."

"Anything else?" "No, I think not." "Have I got a man, a valet?" "No, you had one but he quit last week. You got mad at him for something."

"O. K. I'm going to get up and dress, then."

"Call me this afternoon at five o'clock for further information and instructions, if any."

"All right. Good by."

Halliday sat down on the edge of the finest bed he had ever slept in and

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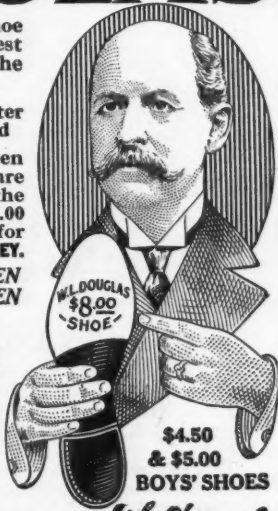
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considered the day that lay ahead of him—also the future. His pyjamas were silk—the first of that material which he had ever worn. Across the back of a chair lay a dressing gown, also silk. The door of his bath stood ajar, revealing a room larger than his entire living quarters of recent date. Windows opened out into an enclosed garden of many levels, after the Japanese style, with tiny pools and channels crossed by gnarled, hump-backed bridges. There was a profusion of flowers.

Halliday sighed. Too bad that he had to arrive at prosperity by such a false route. He took little pleasure in contemplating the fruits of a success that was not his.

Not his? Whose, then? There was no one to claim those pyjamas, that dressing gown, the house, the garden; no one would successfully dispute his right to enjoy those things always if he chose to stay. Not Friedman—he couldn't say anything. Not—

His eyes fell on a framed photograph that stood on his dresser and he had his answer. There was the reason why all this could never be his, why he was merely a paid actor hired to do a certain part during the run of the comedy.

It was a marvelous photograph, all a little misty as if the light that diffused through the piled high hair were afraid to touch her face for fear it would vanish, for fear that it might bring out the tears that seemed lurking back of the eyes, for fear it might dispel the shy sweet smile that took hold of your heart by the coat lapels and asked you to be gentle and kind always.

It was the photograph of a woman whose loveliness was a little more than mortal, whose charm had been contributed by her godfathers and godmothers, the elves.

Halliday got up abruptly and put the portrait of Sheila Kane in a dresser drawer. That was one thing that he felt he had no right to use as a "prop" in his assumed character, even for the run of the comedy.

Sheila and Harrison Halliday attended the funeral together. It was a very trying ordeal. It had seemed to Halliday that the woman was the color of valley lilies always, but that morning she was whiter. The emotion that had to be repressed drained the last vestige of blood hue from her cheeks.

Shooting on the picture was resumed the following morning. Halliday had worked with the company long enough to know Neil Keeley's habits, and he did not show up until an assistant director had been sent to the house to rouse him. When he did arrive he gave a very fair impersonation, from memory, of a leading man with a headache.

It was easier to assume the character of Neil Keeley in real life than it was to be Lancelot on the set. Keeley, with all his vices, had a certain suavity, a finesse of performance, that made him the ideal lover. He had had much practice. But Halliday's lack of adroitness was excused on the ground of ill health, and, for a wonder, Fenway was more than ordinarily patient.

At any rate the net result of the day's work was just about as many scenes as usual, and Fenway professed to be satisfied.

Halliday rather hated to go home. Everything was all right on the lot, but

Neil Keeley's shell didn't fit him. He was a stranger, a usurper in that house, and it seemed to mock him. It was lucky that Neil had not owned a dog. It would have been impossible to fool another man's pup.

But, gee, there was an idea. He'd get a dog. Then there'd be somebody who would be glad to see him come home. Halliday stopped at a kennel and bought an eight weeks old Scotch terrier.

The minute they got in the house the pup began to learn about waxed floors and oriental rugs by sliding across the room with dug-in frantic claws. He always upset going around the unbanked curves.

Halliday sat back and uncorked the first laugh that had come from his diaphragm in many a day and kept it up when the pup doggedly—pardon us, audience—tried navigation again and again.

The lady of the house, attracted by the uproar, came and stood in the doorway. She was in a lovely negligee, a draped Cashmere shawl that made her look like a little girl who is playing mama.

"Oh," she protested—her voice would never have carried far enough for the speaking stage—"you don't like dogs, you know!"

"Maybe I never have," Halliday retorted, "but I like this one. And I defy you not to."

The pup had come to sniff at the hem of her garment and she suddenly sat down and gathered him into her lap.

"I've always loved them," she said.

The terrier squirmed away. Youth was too short to be wasted in loving—yet. Later, perhaps, when every corner had been investigated, everything upsettable had been upset and everything chewable had been preliminarily sampled.

"He's the homeliest dog I ever saw," Sheila pointed out.

"Sh!" Halliday admonished quickly. "He doesn't know it. And I'm never going to let him look at himself in a mirror for fear it will destroy his misplaced self-confidence."

Sheila grinned at his fooling. The pup had paid his way already.

"Has he a name?"

"He will have in five minutes. What do you think of Johnny Walker?"

"Too common."

"Not nowadays."

"I prefer Bourbon anyway."

"You've named him, then. Come here, Bourbon!"

The pup came—probably because his master snapped his fingers at the same time.

And Bourbon is the name of the grizzled, gray, pig-shaped dog that has lived in that house ever since and probably will until the end of his days when he has completely forgotten whose teeth it was that gnawed each and every one of the spindles in the banister going upstairs.

That was the first time that Sheila ever unbent in Harrison Halliday's presence. She hated men as she knew them and she could not help but regard as an interloper the stranger who had usurped her husband's place.

Fortunately Halliday did not take the least advantage of her momentary friendliness and, when she retired again to her chill armor, did not endeavor to entice her out. As a result she came out soon of her own accord.

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"You don't have to stay around here every evening," she told him a few nights later. "I'm used to being left entirely alone and if you want to look up your friends—"

"I have no friends."

"I'd forgotten. Neither had—but you seem as if you would have."

"No."

"Then let's give Scandal Street something to talk about by going out to dinner together somewhere."

It was the happiest evening Halliday had ever spent. She had given him the accolade, had signified that she recognized him as a gentleman and trusted him. He swore an oath to himself never to violate her confidence.

He played the part so well that when he had brought her home he said good night and left her at the door of the house before her rippling laugh brought him back.

"You live here, too, you know," she reminded him.

That night he got her picture out of his dresser drawer and looked at it long and avidly. Not that he expected to forget what she looked like before morning, but even the worshipers of the most spiritual gods like to have a tangible symbol of their divinity.

Another evening, not immediately but within a week, Harrison found a note on his dresser when he got home.

"We are invited to dinner at Julian Lewis's," it said simply. Harrison looked for another sentence, something to indicate whether they were going or not, but it was not there.

It seemed advisable to find out before he dressed so he went to find Sheila. He had never trespassed in the wing of the house which she occupied.

Even now he did not penetrate the unfamiliar temple but stood at the corridor and called "Sheila!" and then again "Sheila!" He was getting accustomed to using her first name.

The door of her room opened and her voice answered from far inside somewhere, "Yes, dear."

His heart jumped even though he knew the term of address was used only because her maid must be with her.

"I want to ask you a question."

"Tell Mr. Keeley to step to the door a minute," Sheila instructed from inside.

The maid opened the door wide and invited Halliday to approach.

It was silly that he should have so much emotion over taking those few simple steps. Those were ordinary floors which he trod, the corridor led to the door of an ordinary woman. Was she? He wondered if his dramatic sense was fooling him into idealizing her into something supernatural, or if she was, perhaps, different.

He tried to banish the diamond mist from his eyes. Because, if this was love, it was the most hopeless love since Héloïse and Abélard.

Halliday stood at her door. She was sitting in a silk lace swathe before her dressing table, her hair streaming down over her shoulders, half turned toward the door to see what he wanted. He caught his breath; she was so very lovely that way. Bourbon, lucky pup, was sleeping with his nose against the hem of her negligee.

"Your note didn't say whether or not we had accepted the Lewis's invitation to dinner," he reminded her.

"No, it didn't."

"Did you?"

"I accepted for myself."

"Was I invited?"

"Ye-es, but I don't think you are really expected."

"Why not?"

"Because you never went but once and then you were much too generous to yourself with your host's brandy. You don't like Mr. Lewis very well, you know."

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"That's probably the reason, then. You think it will be all right for me to stay home?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll go." After which amazing decision Halliday closed the argument by stalking away to his own rooms, where he dressed with meticulous care.

His host concealed his surprise, if any, at Neil Keeley's unprecedented acceptance of his invitation in person. Halliday looked in vain for Mrs. Lewis. There were several other guests, some moving picture people and a few society representatives, but no hostess. During dinner Mr. Lewis monopolized the attention of Sheila, who sat at his right, and allowed his other guests to shift more or less for themselves.

Halliday felt distinctly out of it because there seemed to be twosome love affairs going on all around the table.

Quite obviously Mons. Lewis rather fancied himself as Sheila's cave-gentleman. He was a handsome brute, big, powerful, interestingly gray but right at the top notch of his mature manhood. Halliday knew who he was now. His name was mentioned almost daily in the papers as a Scandal Street attorney. He handled legal matters for half the cinema celebrities; anything from drawing a new contract up to defense on a charge of murder. He had a reputation for stepping rather lively himself and was a plunger on the track at Tia Juana. Halliday wondered how on earth Sheila had ever allowed him to become an accepted and accredited admirer.

"You're not doing your duty by the liquid refreshment," Mr. Lewis reminded Halliday courteously, noticing perhaps that his guest of honor's husband was not having an uproarious time.

Halliday was half inclined to try to live up to Neil Keeley's reputation by making a blotter of himself. But that would be ridiculous. Why should he care whom Sheila lavished her favors upon? Any person in the world, a complete stranger even, had as much right to her sweetness as her pseudo-husband had. Was it possible to assume the character so thoroughly that he was jealous?

Still, Mr. Lewis's polite offer of stimulants reminded Halliday that in one particular at least he was falling down on his characterization. Neil Keeley would have been drunk long before the party had progressed that far.

Halliday couldn't take any more liquor without being uncomfortable but he began pouring out drinks and spilling them on the heavy rug under the table. That was pathetically easy to do as no one watched him at all. Apparently he had a reputation as an impossible dinner guest.



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Eventually, and still in character, Halliday slumped over into a semblance of sleeping. The others finally noticed it and commented upon his condition as being conventional.

Later, when it came time to go home, Lewis said he would take Sheila and suggested that she leave Neil where he was to sleep it off.

Sheila objected, however, and they finally bundled him into the rear seat of the sedan. For a moment Halliday was flattered by her solicitude until he remembered that probably she was afraid to leave him there supposedly drunk for fear he would betray her by babbling the truth.

Sheila herself drove.

"How much longer are you going to stick to that dirty swine back there?" asked Lewis when they were well on their way.

"Sh!" warned Sheila.

"It isn't necessary. He's got enough alcohol in him to make him deaf, dumb and blind for twenty-four hours."

Sheila sighed. "I didn't think he'd get quite so drunk tonight."

"Why not?"

"Oh, he's been rather nice lately! I hoped—I don't know what I hoped. Anyway I don't hope anything any more. Are all men like that?"

"I'm not."

"No, but I'm not sure but I'm more afraid of you. Your vice is all of the head. Neil, there, doesn't mean the dreadful things he does. He never, as you do, thinks them all out in advance."

"I don't think of anything in advance except that I love you and am only waiting for the day that you will wake up and realize that you are wasting your life on that drunken pig. He'll kill himself or somebody will kill him sometime anyway. Why wait for death to do something the law will accomplish more quickly?"

They had arrived at the Keeley-Kane bungalow.

"You're going to kiss me good night," Lewis affirmed.

Sheila did not leave the driver's seat. "Why?" she asked idly. "I never have before."

"I know it, but you need something to rouse you from your lethargy. Good Lord, girl, you're only half alive."

Strange, the man in the back seat who was listening, watching, ready to spring if need be, had often thought the same thing. A lovely statue, half living, half marble—that was Sheila Kane. Wonderful, and yet only a part of her possibilities realized.

Lewis held her face between his two hands. If she had resisted, Halliday would have strangled him. But she didn't. She sat passive, listless, like one who is too tired to care. Lewis pressed her mouth with his lips.

Finally she sprang away.

"No! No! No!" she exclaimed.

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know. But I don't like to have you kiss me. You're not the right one."

"Oh," Lewis sneered, "so he still stands between us! I wish to God he was dead."

Sheila had clambered out of the car and now ran into the house, closing the door after herself. It locked automatically, as Lewis discovered by trying the knob.

He came back to the car and dragged



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Halliday out and threw him on the doorstep.

"There you are, you fool." He stood over Halliday meditatively and slapped him once with the palm of his hand. "No, I mustn't do that. It would be easy but there are better ways—better ways."

After he had gone Sheila came out and helped Halliday in.

She cried as she did it. Halliday wondered why. He did not dare tell her now that he was perfectly sober, not after having seen and heard so much. It would be too embarrassing. So he pretended to be quite dazed until she had left him in his room and closed the door after herself.

For days and days Sheila avoided him. He was in disgrace and knew there was no possibility of seeking a pardon. The full extent of his banishment was brought home when he discovered that Bourbon was regularly sleeping by her closed door—on the outside. Bourbon was technically his dog and she did not want to have anything to do with him.

Bourbon waited patiently. So did Halliday.

The picture was finished—at least the shooting of it was. Sheila went away—to Honolulu, the papers said; she had not said anything to Halliday about it.

Halliday dug out the picture of her that was hidden in his drawer, the picture that belonged to another man, a dead man.

Once with it sitting before him on his desk he started a letter to her.

Thus: "Dear Wife." That wouldn't do. He tore it up. Again: "Dear Sheila." It sounded presumptuous. "Dear Mrs. Keeley" was absurd.

So he began without any term of address. "It has been many days since I have seen you. What are you doing with yourself? Do you ever think of me?"

That was all wrong. He was verging on the sentimental and that would lose him what little shred of her regard he possessed.

Apparently it was impossible to write her a letter that he dared send. So he went on and wrote one that he would never let anyone see, a private vent to his emotions.

Not seeing you is much worse than being really ill. The place where my eyes want to rest is so conspicuously blank that I hunt around frantically for scenes that you have never colored with your presence. That isn't much use either, because something inside of me always whispers how much more wonderful it would be if you were there.

Why try to fool myself? I love you. Everybody does, so I would be unconventional if I did not. Of course I tell myself that my love is a more understanding one than that of any of the others. I don't know. To me your charm is so much more wistfully compelling than that of any other mere woman on this earth that I think of you as something almost supernatural, as an elf who vanishes with the morning sun, a creature of lovely gossamer and mist who would be profaned by the earthly love of a man.

Whatever you are, woman or spirit, you have taken all my heart and put tears of memory in my eyes so that I cannot see other things. To you, dear, I bring—

Someone had rapped on his door several times, but Halliday had scarcely noticed

it. A louder hammering compelled his attention.

"Come in."

Tamaki, the Jap, entered.

"Misto Friedman here, sir."

"All right."

"Wait for you, he say. Come quick."

Halliday sighed. Such a summons must be obeyed.

So the impersonator put on his coat and went out to the car in front of the house where his employer was waiting.

"Want to talk to you about several things. We'll go over to my office. Sheila's in town. Arrived unexpectedly and telephoned me to get you."

"What for?"

The film magnate chewed his cigar a moment meditatively.

"I don't understand her myself. I wrote her a letter awhile back proposing that we go right on with the Keeley-Kane productions. In my opinion you are good enough. I'll put my money in another one. But she says no, nothing doing. She wants to work by herself, live by herself and forget the name Keeley as soon as she can get a divorce. Of course the last part is impossible. You can't be divorced from somebody you've never been married to. But the rest of it we've got to listen to even if it does cost me a small fortune to let you go. I hope it won't be necessary but of course that was the understanding with which we started this mix-up. You'll have to take a trip around the world or something like that and disappear from view while you're away. I'll take care of expenses and finance you in any other business you want to start up in so long as you keep out of pictures."

They were in Friedman's office by that time. Halliday had not heard everything that had been said. His mind had grasped the idea that he was not to be associated with Sheila any more and had gone off duty right there to indulge in a fit of dumb, unreasoning misery.

"You're quite prepared to sign off?" Friedman suggested regretfully.

"Yes. I'll do anything you say. You've been square with me and I have no claim."

"I've drawn up—"

Telephone buzzer.

"Hello . . . Yes. Sol Friedman speaking . . . Yes, Sheila . . . I'm damned . . . Yes. We'll wait here for you. Good by."

He hung up the receiver.

"Can you beat that?" he demanded of his visitor. "She says she's changed her mind and that she'll be right over to sign up for another picture as co-star with you. Far be it from me to complain about the vagary of the female brain that puts half a million into my pocket, but you can't tie Sheila for a complete change of front inside of sixty minutes by the clock."

Halliday did not notice what Friedman was saying. His mind was still in a confusion that it did not emerge from until Sheila herself stood in the doorway and released him from his gloomy enchantment into the sunshine by a single misty smile.

She was like the dewy dawn of a day after a night of countless hours.

Halliday never presumed to inquire why she had changed her mind. Upon Friedman's advice and example he let

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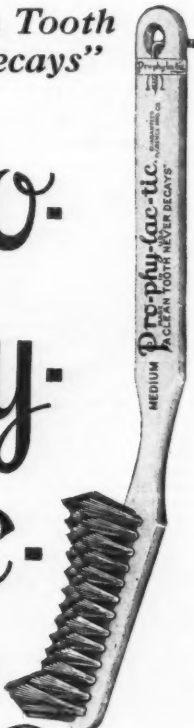
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well enough alone, feeling his way each day back to the paths of delightful quasi-intimacy, hoping now boldly that some day, sometime, he would dare to adore her openly. And tell her.

The new picture, "Atlantis," was three or four months under way when Halliday, resting at home one day after a strenuous night session at the studio, was notified by the Jap that a lady was calling, a lady who refused to be put off by the usual excuses that the star was sleeping, ill or absent. She claimed to know he was there and intended to see him on a matter of importance to himself.

Halliday put on his coat—he had been playing with Bourbon out in the garden—and went into the house.

The woman was there, a rather good looking girl, well dressed, a little heavier than she wanted to be probably, with well kept hands and well shod feet and ankles that the sheerest hose could not keep from appearing a trifle thick.

"Well?" said Halliday inquiringly.

"Not so good," the girl returned. "Not so good. I don't exactly expect you to kiss me right here and now, but you ought to register a little pleasure upon seeing me. Aren't you glad I escaped with my life when you steered us into the ditch that last time we were out on a party together?"

"I don't think I know what you are talking about."

"Oh-la-la-la, my dear! I'd heard that you had reformed. But don't be good around me. I know too much, too much that other people might be interested in."

"You must be mistaken. I never saw you before."

"You dirty liar." She advanced toward Halliday as if about to strike him and then stopped suddenly to study his face. "Humph!" She lowered her arm and pinned his eyes with her own. "I'm inclined to agree with you. Who are you?"

"My name is Neil Keeley, as you—"

"Tell that to somebody who didn't know Neil a lot better than his own wife. If you never saw me before you're not Neil, and if you're not there's a pretty kettle of fish set to fry." She appraised him carefully. "You're better looking than Neil, if anything. And you've got something on the ball he lacked. Women loved him but I think they would fall for you even harder. They'd trust you further. I guess we'll be friends. I'm living at the Hillview Apartments. My rooms are on the third floor, nice and quiet. Number thirty-three is my door. Shall I expect you this evening?"

"My dear girl," Halliday began, "I have no intention of—"

"Before you say it, take time to think. I'm all ready to like you or even more than that, but be careful not to hurt my feelings. Because, believe me, I can hurt back. Think what a riot it will make on the front page if the newspapers find out that Neil Keeley is dead and that his wife has been living for nearly a year with a man who isn't married to her. Wonderful stuff. And Scandal Street has been quiet so long the newspapers are just aching for something to bust loose. You'll be over this evening?"

Halliday looked her square in the eye to see if there was any sign of wavering. There wasn't.

"I'll be there," he said briefly.

Sheila, who was beginning to know his moods as any woman is bound to know the moods of a man who lives under the same roof with her, sensed Halliday's perturbation and tried to distract his attention from his troubles. She was very sweet about it.

"Which would you rather do, go over to the Montmartre and dance or sit right in your own home and have me dance for you?"

"What do you mean, dance for me?" Halliday asked suspiciously.

"I'll show you, my lord. I have one accomplishment you know nothing about. For a picture I did last season called 'Zimtoom' I learned a sort of a Nautch dance—got it from a real East Indian dancer. The audience has to sit cross-legged on a cushion on the floor in order to appreciate it properly. Can you do that?"

Halliday seated himself clumsily as directed and put himself in an attitude of grouchy expectancy.

"The costume, of course, isn't right," Sheila explained naively, "because I ought to have on long pantalettes, or whatever they call 'em, of silk, and bracelets with golden bells on my ankles. Orchestra, commence!"

She started the phonograph with a record of "The Song of India" and switched off all the lights but the grate fire.

If anyone else had done that dance it might have been vulgar, certainly voluptuous. But Sheila's body was only delightfully naughty. Halliday realized with a pang to what a tremendous degree of intimacy they had arrived for her to trust him unquestioningly like that.

She swayed to the music like a charmed cobra. She was a column of smoke stirred by eddying breezes, a weeping willow drooping over a brook, a slim waterfall clothed in its own misty spray.

She was beautiful, she was sweet and she was enticing. On the gentle current of the vanishing melody she floated to him and dropped at his feet, her eyes slightly aflame and questioning.

He did take her in his arms. She seemed to expect it and did not resist.

He might have kissed her, too, then and there for the first time, except in front of a camera of course, if Bourbon had not come scampering in for his after-dinner romp. By the time he had hopped into the party and had done a little kissing on his own hook, all sentiment had been knocked into a cocked hat.

Halliday looked at Sheila in surprise. The soft firelight was especially gentle to her and she looked scarcely a half grown child. He had been mad to consider her a woman. Yet there was a tantalizing memory of maturity about her as she had lain for that fleeting instant in his arms, an electricity about the cool tingle of her flesh where his cheek had touched her uncovered shoulder.

He was glad the pup had butted in—glad for the sake of the situation, that is. And he scrambled to his feet.

"Let's go to the Montmartre for a while," Sheila proposed, getting up too. "Will I be all right in this dress or—"

"I have another engagement," Halliday informed her with unintentional brusqueness.

"Why don't you say you don't want to take me?" she countered, laughing. "You

never have any engagements in the evening. You almost always sit in your room writing letters. To whom, I ask you, to whom?"

"How do you know I write letters?"

"I've stood outside your door sometimes and heard you tear them up. Why don't you ever send them to her sometime?"

"I'm afraid she might be angry."

"Coward! Is your date for tonight with her?"

"Perhaps."

"Will you take me along?"

"No."

Sheila could be wilful upon occasion and she stamped her foot now like a child who has been denied a pleasure excursion. "I want to go. There's nothing to do and I'm bored."

"I'm sorry but—"

"Oh, very well, I'll get someone else to take me!"

She went to the telephone and called a number. Halliday watched her dumbly.

"Hello," she was saying, "I'd like to speak to Mr. Julian Lewis, please."

"Sheila!" Halliday interrupted her. "I'll—"

"Too late, kind sir, too late, I've baited my hook for another fish. Hello, Julian. Sheila speaking."

Halliday found his hat and went out, slamming the door after himself.

"I'm glad I dressed in my rags, too," his hostess assured him, glancing with approval at Halliday's dinner clothes. "I'm feeling just like a party." "WOMAN"

was written in capital letters on the personality of the girl who had opened the door of Number 33 at the Hillview Apartments. "I thought you'd like the dress. Your taste and Neil's is pretty much alike in women, Mr.—"

"Neil Keeley, please," Halliday suggested.

"You want to keep that up even among friends?"

"Obviously I'm obliged to, Miss—"

"You don't know my name either do you, sweetie? Kiss me and I'll tell you." Halliday reluctantly approached her. She laughed. "They won't be hard to take after the first one. There, that's over. Boy, I like your lips. Well, all the names they had left when they came to christen me were Cora May Foreman. Call me either Cora or May unless you want to make up a sweet nothing of your own. Whisper any name you think of or just whistle and I'll come because I can feel how easy it will be to slip in your direction."

"Let's go out somewhere for a while," Halliday proposed with concealed apprehension.

"Then we can come back here later," she acquiesced.

They went to the newly opened dance resort, Montmartre, which was already half filled with tourists identifying each other as screen stars.

The cash customers recognized Halliday—or thought they did. There were only two or three better known faces in all the world than the one he was wearing, and everybody turned to look.

Halliday had been looked at before but usually when he was with Sheila, and he had been very proud and had attributed the attention to her simple but thrilling beauty. Now he felt strangely ashamed and would have welcomed any diversion.



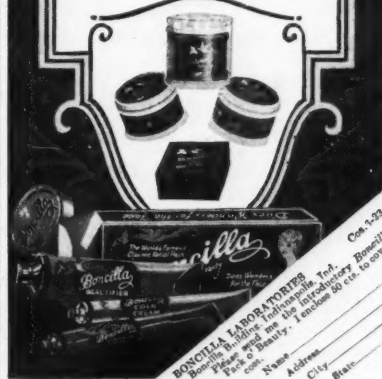
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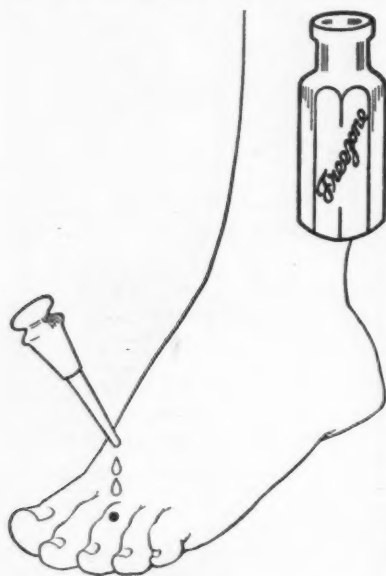
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Cora May was not suffering from the same shyness, however, and she paraded between tables with all the reticence of a circus calliope.

They were seated.

Sheila came in.

On the arm of Julian Lewis.

She passed right by the table where Halliday and his partner sat and cut him dead.

First Halliday flushed. That receded and he became cold with anger. Why should she do a thing like that? Was she not there with a man who was not her husband? For a moment he had forgotten that she had no husband.

Very well. If Sheila was going to be petty and mean he would retaliate.

Halliday became very attentive to Cora May. He made her laugh boisterously. And if he had not been the great Neil Keeley he would have been put off the floor for the way he danced with her.

That was all very well for the evening. But in the morning there was a film of gray ashes over everything, on his tongue, on his ideals, on the pedestal where once his goddess had stood.

Sheila did not speak to him at all except as required in one scene they played together on the lot.

When Cora May called him up in the evening he evaded her. The next night he tried to do the same thing but there was a vague hint of a threat in her voice and he went over. She had a new fur-trimmed suit which he was allowed to pay for. He was glad to escape.

It was an intolerable situation. As he loved Sheila he must keep the other woman quiet, and every step he took in that direction drove Sheila more irrevocably from him.

There seemed to be no way out.

Save one.

If Cora May were dead then Sheila would be safe. There seemed no other method of sealing her lips so as to be certain that they would never be opened again.

After all, the world would not be much worse off without Cora May. Would not the world be more greatly benefited by keeping Sheila Kane in the niche where she was adored as an example of all that was sweet and good than by the continued existence of a woman whose influence at best was negligible and who might become a menace at any time?

Not that Halliday was a murderer. The idea of such a thing was beyond his wildest dreams.

But he remembered what had happened to Neil Keeley and Cora May once before. It might occur again, only in a more secluded spot and one where the bodies could never be recovered. He could make sure that there would be two bodies, not one, this time.

Sol Friedman called Halliday into his office.

"Neil," he said, "you're breaking Sheila's heart by the way you're acting with this Foreman girl. She's notorious, you know. Why do you do it? You didn't seem like that kind of a chap once."

Halliday sat a minute. He had to tell the chief.

"You know who Cora May Foreman is, don't you?"

"No. Who?"

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"She was in the other seat of that roadster that went into the ditch a little over a year ago. She came to me and threatened to tell everything. I dared her to until she pointed out what the public would do to Sheila's reputation if it came out that she and I were living in the same house but not married to each other. Then I caved in. I couldn't stand for that."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Because I'm head over heels in love with Sheila, the same as you are, you old fraud, the same as any man is who ever comes in contact with her whether he is married or single, property man or star. I'd die for her just as cheerfully as any of the rest of you. But I think you're worrying yourself unduly if you think she gives a whoop what I do. She seems to be stepping out quite a bit with Julian Lewis herself."

Sol Friedman eyed his young star shrewdly. "A little jealous, eh, in addition to everything else? But don't worry about Lewis. He has been hanging around Sheila ever since she first came out here. He may not be a saint, but at least his reputation is good and his attention to Sheila isn't hurting her socially. The thing we've got to worry about is the other angle—the Cora May thing."

"I'll agree to handle that, one way or another," Halliday volunteered briefly.

"What do you mean 'or another'?"

"I'm not certain yet myself."

"Can we buy her off?"

"I don't think so. She gets nine-tenths of my salary now and you know that's quite an item. She thinks she's sure of that as long as she holds the whip over me. That part of it is easy, though."

"The hard part, I take it, is being with her?"

"Yes."

"Many men like her?"

Halliday shrugged. "She isn't repulsive, if that's what you mean, but I doubt if any man would be very mad about even Venus if she were his jailer."

There seemed nothing further to discuss and Halliday was not in the mood for shop talk so he rose to depart. "Can you suggest anything to do that I haven't done?"

"No, Neil, I'm darned if I can. But I'm glad you told me."

"Of course it's understood that Sheila is never to know anything about this. She's the kind of a generous, impulsive woman who wouldn't accept the only thing I can do for her in all my life. You won't mention this to her, will you?"

"Not under the circumstances, if you are quite sure you can keep Cora May quiet."

"I'm sure."

"O. K."

"Good by. Wait a minute. Can I borrow your big car for the afternoon? Mine's in the shop having an axle straightened."

"Certainly. Tell Tom I said he is under your orders for the day. He's out there in the parking space right now. As you go out ask my secretary to telephone the garage to send over the roadster."

Four hours' drive in the mountains Halliday left Sol Friedman's car and his chauffeur while he climbed an ex-wagon trail up the hillside through the scrub timber to a place that he recollected once to have seen when the company had been

Cosmopolitan

out on scenes.

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out on location filming some Holy Grail scenes.

It was there just as he remembered it, a great abandoned mine shaft with a tall heap of ore in back of it. Evidently it had once been a big paying property because there were several buildings grouped around the hole in the ground and there was a lot of hoisting machinery that could be seen through the flapping, half hung doors of the rotting sheds.

The shaft itself was a very large one, roofed over and dark inside. A barrier had been placed across the trail leading to it, a heavy oak beam, bolted on.

But Halliday had remembered that, too, and he had a hack saw under his coat.

It took him over an hour to cut off the heads of the bolts and push the timber down into the shaft.

After a long time it splashed.

When Halliday reached home that night he found several urgent messages from Cora, and almost as soon as he got in the telephone rang. As he answered it he heard Sheila's door close emphatically.

"I'm not going to see you tonight," he declared, "but we're going to spend all day together tomorrow. Listen to my plan. I'll call at about ten with luncheon and everything and take you to a gorgeous hilltop I found today. We can stay as long as we like. What say?"

"Fine, sweetie. You know I'd spend a day with you even if it was in Hades. I don't care if we never come back."

"Which is perhaps lucky," Halliday muttered, but not audibly.

It was pretty hard sledding to make love to Cora May with any semblance of conviction the next morning. He doubted, rather, if he was fooling her any.

But she went with him in the car and he drove out of the city as rapidly as possible. There was little danger of his plans miscarrying if he could get her out in the lonely hills.

They were perhaps an hour outside of the city limits, quite a way in the foothills, when Halliday noticed that his companion looked back furtively from time to time. She did not know that he saw her and he kept a weather eye on the rear view mirror, wondering what on earth she expected to see.

There was nothing.

After a while she did not look around any more.

Halliday wondered why until he picked up a faintly moving speck in the mirror and identified it as an automobile following them. That complicated matters.

At the first sharp turn in the mountain road he stopped, blocking the trail.

"What's the matter?" Cora asked.

"A little spark plug trouble," Halliday informed her. "It will only take a minute."

"We ought not to stop here—it's dangerous."

"Why?"

"Suppose another car should come around that curve in back of us."

"Very little chance of that, dear. You didn't see any car in back of us, did you?"

"N-n-no."

"We're safe, then. There are no roads running into this one for miles back. It's a lonesome track anyway."

He pretended to fix the spark plugs,

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keeping an eye all the while on the girl in the front seat, who was evidently not entirely at ease.

"I think I'll take a little walk while you're finishing that," she suggested finally.

"But I'm just through," he objected. "You'll have plenty of time to walk when we get there. It would only waste your strength to get out now. Besides, here is the man we are waiting for."

The nose of a big car came poking cautiously around the treacherous mountain curve.

"Mr. Julian Lewis, I believe," Halliday said in greeting as the surprised driver pulled up to a stop. "Curious that we should meet out here on this little frequented mountain trail."

"Not very." The big man had recovered his aplomb immediately. "I was following you."

"Honest today, I see. How does it seem? You are doing your snouting in the interests of my wife, I suppose?"

"Why, no. My services are retained by the lady sitting in your car. You have no wife, I believe, Mr. Halliday."

So that was it. The cards were on the table.

"I admit," the attorney was continuing, "that when Miss Foreman came to me last night and laid the facts in the case before me I was very glad to find out that Mrs. Keeley is a widow, but primarily my weight is all thrown in the scales to see that Miss Foreman gets justice from you."

"Meaning?"
 "Justice to a woman means marriage, or at least custom has made women think so."

"And I presume that you for your part would marry Mrs. Keeley?"

"Correct. You are the only thing that stands in my way. With you married to someone else the last obstacle is removed."

"Except that she may not care to accept the honor."

"She will. You forget that her reputation is in our hands. You have done so much to save it that surely she will be willing to make a slight sacrifice to carry on the good work."

"You would not force her into a union that is distasteful to her?"

Lewis laughed. "My dear Mr. Halliday, how little you know me. Of course I'd force her, just as I'm going to force you to marry Miss Foreman this pleasant California morning."

"Force me? How?"

"By the very facts in the case. Unless Miss Foreman is Mrs. Halliday before I leave you I'll spread the whole story when I go back. You have no alternative."

"Yes I have."

"Which is?"

"That you don't go back. Get out of that machine."

Lewis smiled. "Make me."

As Halliday stepped toward him the attorney reached for his hip pocket.

Halliday struck his arm and then, twining his fingers in his coat collar, yanked him out of the driver's seat without opening the door.

Tamaki, the Jap, kept taking out of his pocket and then replacing the letter which his master had given him that morning with strict injunction to deliver it about noon. Tamaki was afraid he would forget

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it and finally put the letter on the brim of his hat and then placed both of them on a chair in front of the back door.

They were there when Sheila came out to give some orders about dinner before leaving for the studio.

"What's this?" she asked, picking up the envelope.

"Letta Misto Keeley tell me to take Misto Friedman."

"Oh, is that what it is? Well, never mind about that. I'll deliver it myself and save you the trip. I'm going to see Mr. Friedman as soon as I get to the studio."

Which is the reason Sol Friedman received the note from Harrison Halliday at least two hours sooner than the latter had expected it to be delivered.

Sol asked Sheila to wait while he read it. After he had finished a complete perusal, he looked up at Sheila.

"Sheila, my dear, once upon a time I rather thought that you were beginning to care for your co-star. On the off chance that I was even partly right, I am going to show you this letter, although it is violating a promise that I made to Neil yesterday."

"Do you think you ought to?"

"Yes. I think it is a question of life or death."

She took the piece of paper gingerly and read:

DEAR SOL:

Remember that I told you that I would handle the Cora May Foreman angle of our problem if you would do the rest. Well, I am going to make good. You will recollect that once upon a time when Sheila decided that she did not want to work with me, you suggested that I take a trip around the world and never come back. Your suggestion was a good one and I am going to act upon it, starting this morning. The only difference between my plan and yours is that I am going to take Cora May Foreman with me and she isn't coming back either. I will depend upon you to take care that the press is properly informed of my trip with vague references to my itinerary, and also it will be up to you to see that Sheila never learns the truth. I can see no point in telling her even in the years to come when time may soften the bitter feelings which she has for me. You and I are the only persons in the world who know that I love her and that I am doing the only thing in my power to prove it.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Keeley

P.S.—It is rather a relief to be using that signature for the last time.

Sheila handed the letter back. "I don't believe I quite understand what the letter means."

"I didn't think you would. But I do. It means that unless some sort of a miracle happens a young man who loves you is about to lay down his life in your service."

And then he went on to tell her a lot of facts, including one to the effect that his chauffeur had just made a report that Halliday had taken the day before and the curious way he had acted at the old mine shaft. Sol Friedman was nobody's fool, and with the letter in hand he was able to piece together a pretty fair reconstruction of Halliday's plan.

In ten minutes Sheila and Sol were in his big car with Tom, the chauffeur, at

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the wheel, retracing the route over which he had driven Halliday the day before.

Only going twice as fast this time.

At a sharp turn in the mountain road they came upon a car which had been abandoned, a rather large and beautiful machine.

"This is Julian Lewis's car," Sheila identified it positively. "I've ridden in it scores of times."

"And here's blood in the road," contributed Tom. "And somebody fell here and was dragged away." He was following the tracks in the dust. "Here they put him in another car that was standing closer to the cut. The other car went on this way."

Julian Lewis was perhaps the stronger man of the two. But he was not animated by anger as was Harrison Halliday, and also he had a certain regard for his life. Harrison had none. In fact, he thought of it as a thing forfeited and he didn't give a hang what way he died.

That is the spirit which makes for deadly fighting.

Julian Lewis was unconscious in five minutes, unconscious and battered.

Harrison dragged him over to his own car and dumped him in the tonneau.

Cora May, who had stood by in helpless terror while the battering had been going on, hesitated about getting in the seat beside Harrison.

"You get in!" he ordered.

"What are you going to do?"

Harrison laughed. "I'm going up in the hills for a picnic, just as I had planned, and you are going along with me."

She hesitated and started as if to turn.

"Don't do that." He stopped her. "I would rather have one of my guests come willingly. But if necessary—" He stopped.

She looked to see if he meant it and then climbed into the seat.

The next two hours were spent in driving mountain roads at a rate of speed at which they had never been negotiated before. Harrison didn't care what he did and he was deaf to the protests of his highly nervous passenger.

The car reached the place where the trail branched off steeply to the mine shaft. Harrison drove past the branch trail, then backed up in his tracks, turned off, drove up the hill a way and then got out and dusted off the trail with his hat so that it looked as if his car had gone straight on by.

Perhaps his precautions would have fooled a pursuer if it had not happened that just as his car was vanishing amid the scrub timber another car came up the trail in time to see him disappear.

Harrison forced his car across rocky roads at the highest rate of speed he could achieve on that grade. What did he care if the springs broke now?

The trail flattened out a little just before it approached the mine buildings. The car gathered speed. Cora May, bewildered up to now, sensed the alertness in Halliday's attitude, guessed that whatever he was about to do boded no good to herself and that the climax was imminent.

She clutched his arm.

"Neil!" she screamed.

He threw her aside but she came back. He paid no attention. The muscles of his arms were tensed like drawn steel wire under her touch. Her clutching fingers



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made no more impression upon them than it he had been a block of wood set to hold the wheel just so.

He stepped on the accelerator. The car bounced and reared but kept going forward towards that black hole. He couldn't see but did not need to.

The car shot into the darkness of the shed.

Crash! It struck something that splintered.

That was strange. He had taken down the oak bar the day before.

Whatever it was gave way under the violence of the shock and the front wheels of the car went over the edge.

But the motor was dead, killed by the force of the impact, and the car hung poised with the chassis resting solidly on the floor timbers.

Tom, Friedman's chauffeur, stopped the sedan just outside the shed which covered the one-time mine hoist.

His passengers with sick apprehension went on foot into the dark hole.

An old man with a lantern in one hand and a heavy wrench in the other was talking to the driver of the car that hung half over the pit.

"Darned lucky for you, young fellow, that I just got through replacing the barrier that some wood thief stole on me

yesterday. Otherwise you'd be down at the bottom of Kingdom Come."

Harrison Halliday was clambering wearily out of the driver's seat. It's disconcerting to find yourself alive when, according to plan, you should be several seconds dead.

He had not seen Sheila until she stepped into his arms and he found that she was crying.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?"

"I was afraid," she said.

"That I'd be killed?"

"That, and that you didn't love me."

Cora May Foreman surveyed the scene with swiftly recovered nerve.

"Very pretty," she said, "very pretty. But how the newspapers are going to chuckle when I spill my stuff about the love nest but no marriage license."

"Sorry to spoil your gloat, Miss Whatever-your-name-is," Sheila replied, looking up from Halliday's shoulder, "but your story won't have an awful kick. If you want to tell it to the newspaper men you will have to do it at our wedding supper tonight because they're all going to be there. I don't believe the public is going to be so interested in *when* we were married as in the fact that *we are* married."

Not until they were safe at home and Sol Friedman had gone to make the

wedding arrangements did Halliday ask the question uppermost in his mind.

"Why were you so sure of my love?"

"I once read a letter of yours that you never sent."

"Oh, on that day you came back from Honolulu and changed your mind about working with me?"

"Yes. Later I thought it was addressed to that woman, but today I know the truth—and I like it."

Tap! Tap! Tap!

"Come in," permitted Sheila.

Enter Tamaki. Stands abashed at unaccustomed spectacle of mistress in master's arms.

"Pardon, but Misto Dog Bourbon have whip big p'lice dog nex' door and wishes to bleed on best Turkey rug. What shall do?"

"Let him do it," declared Sheila.

"Get him two rugs," supplemented her nearly husband.

"And have one yourself," Sheila finished. "This is the day of days. Tamaki, make yourself scarce unless you want to be embarrassed. We're shameless."

Tamaki understood a hint when it was delivered on the point of his jaw that way. So he withdrew.

And in some unaccountable fashion we've been shoved outside of the door with him.

Darn! *Sic semper tyrannis.*

*For one of the most irresistible stories Frank R. Adams ever wrote see
COSMOPOLITAN for July—on sale at all news stands June tenth*

The Garden of Peril

(Continued from page 80)

Bruce Kelly had done, and his complete confidence in ultimate recovery under the latter's skilful treatment, but that very fact, he went on to say, had forced him to the use of his revolver. For he did not want to recover. Sorrow for the loss of his brother and a complete and unconquerable boredom with life had decided him on making an end of things. He was only sorry for the grief this would cause his wife and relatives, and for that he begged their forgiveness. He also apologized to the Doctor and the coroner, and made the one last request that his body be left alone and "not carved up in any post-mortem business" as that was "more than he could stand the thought of."

Nothing to be done by any coroner on such evidence but bring in a verdict of temporary insanity; with which everyone agreed. How could a *sane* man be "unconquerably" bored with an existence that held a lovely and devoted wife and an impending income of £50,000 a year?

Bruce Kelly's strange desire to ignore the dead man's last request and hold a post-mortem just the same was looked upon as both morbid and heartless, and again public opinion backed the Coroner's decision that no good purpose could be served by such a course, while unnecessary pain might thereby be inflicted upon the widow. Poor little widow! Everyone felt for her hard luck. Losing husband, a title and the prospect of great wealth . . . all at the crack of a pistol! At the same time no one dared even hint sympathy for the loss of material things, to one so dazed by grief.

"I am like a child lost in a dark wood," was all she could pitifully say to those who came forward, nervous but generous in their offers of practical assistance and advice. "But Major Heseltine, my husband's cousin and best friend, will know what is best for me to do. I will just wait here quietly until he comes."

So events stood still, waiting upon the return of Punch. Arrangements for the transportation of Pam Heseltine's mortal body—now resting temporarily in the local cemetery—to the vaults of his ancestors at Scawshane were suspended, and it seemed natural enough, meantime, that the stricken lady at Minto Lodge should make no plans for leaving Africa without the kindly direction of her kinsman's hand. At any rate she waited.

And in a garden a girl too waited; hoping and fearing; wondering if God would be good to her and let the process of saving Punch Heseltine from destruction come naturally or whether she must fight for it, even as Pam in the hour of his death had implored her. If the latter course, then she knew she would have to do it single-handed, and against great odds. There must be no dragging of the Doctor into it, nor raking of the dead man from his rest . . . even though with his own lips he had commanded her to leave *nothing* unsaid. But he himself had gone down to the grave loyal to disloyalty, faithful to betrayal, and it was not for Peril to unseal his secrets.

Yet she must save Punch from Doria; that was what it all reduced itself to. Pit her girlhood, her simplicity and her

inexperience, against the guile, the charm, the dazzle of a siren! How was it possible she could prevail? She knew not . . . only that she *must*. And God was on her side. She knew that too, for He had brought Punch to her here that night when she lay weeping in an abandonment of grief—weeping for two things, for her little bush-baby's death, yes; but above all for the fact that she had seen Pam Heseltine's wife upon the breast of his cousin; their lips almost touching; and in the horror of it had realized that she loved that man and could not bear him to betray his honor.

And he had come there and found her weeping! And something in his gentleness and simplicity had revealed to her that he was without guilt in the matter. The woman had tempted, but he had resisted; indeed, she had the evidence of her own eyes on many a day, as they rode past, as to *that* state of things.

Yes—God was on her side, the God of her faith, and of all clean, loyal men; and she prayed to Him every night in her garden to give her the victory; and even while she prayed she listened for the jingle of spurs on the road, and a man's step on the path. And at last they came!

On the night that Punch Heseltine returned to his camp, and put forth again within the hour, he cared not who heard the ring of his horse's hoofs upon the Umtété road, nor who knew that they stopped at the gate of a garden on a hill; for this was no clandestine rendezvous he fared forth upon. There were things to be done on the morrow, he knew, disagreeable things, sad obligations, family duties.

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But tonight was his . . . his and Love's. Knowledge had come to him, in the silences of the veldt, that the very core of existence hid for him in this enchanted garden, though he could not be truly certain that the girl he hoped to find waiting there was *truly his and for him* until he held her against his heart, in the place where first he had found her.

It was just such another night as that. Dim and purple with the sparkle of a thousand stars overhead. Full of that profound silence which composes a myriad voices of nature: love calls of tree creatures and dwellers in the grass, whispering of leaves, rustle of flowers. On lone veldt places he had dreamed of this sweet spot, realizing that here dwelt heart's desire. All that woman can hold and give to man was here for him—the riches of the earth in the little circle of a girl's arms.

He knew when he found her at last, under the trees, and held his lips to hers, that all he dreamed of was true . . . That rare and wonderful gift of the gods had come into his possession—purity and passion in equal measure . . . and he drank deep from the fresh cup of her lips, a draught to fire his blood, yet cleanse his soul.

"A pool of lilies! . . . I will wash away all my madness in you, my darling."

No more roaming and fevered quest for Punch Heseltine! This lovely warm vase of life contained all he had sought the world over. Voyage and harbor were here; Europe and the wilderness; wine and spring water.

"I loved you from the moment I saw you sitting there in the gloom . . . so kind and gentle with poor old Pam, and his pack of cards!"

"I loved you *before* that . . . when you rode alone below my garden . . . with a moody look . . ."

"That was because I could not find you . . . I knew you were somewhere waiting for me . . . but I could not find you."

"O Punch! I was so afraid you would get lost on the way." He did not tell her how nearly that had come to pass, for, like Pam, he was one of those who did not "tell." But his kisses told her all she wanted to know of both past and future. Their happiness was such as to be almost too keen to be borne. They were only simple mortals after all, composed of very human elements. Moments flew into hours, and all too swiftly the wind of coming separation blew chill between them, shaking his heart, and making the lilies of the pool shiver and tremble.

"Let us get married quickly, my heart! . . . then no more parting!"

"Yes . . . quickly," she sighed under his lips; "then together forever."

Just at the last she remembered to give him Pam's letter, which she always carried with her; and he in turn remembered tasks both tiresome and tragic that awaited him. For a moment the shadow of Doria fell across their joy, but instantly passed, for all power and allure had long since gone out of that memory for him, replaced by this great and pure passion of his life. As for Peril, she knew that God had verily and indeed been on her side.

Later, in the quiet of his camp he read and pondered Pam's letter. Much of its inner meaning remained hidden for years, and some of it forever, as the writer had

intended. But here and there a sentence carried a sharp edge or sounded a strangely warning ring.

It is your duty to marry, and soon, if Scawshane is not to pass forever from the Heseltines . . . Marry a girl who will love *you* (not herself) who will give you sons, and something to care for more satisfying than that pride of life and "lust of the eye" of which both you and I have been over-hot in the pursuit. Above all, bring fresh blood and clean blood into the old stock. But if for any reason all this is not in your plan . . . pause a bit, Punch, and do not be too proud to take counsel. The bearer of this letter has it in her hands to guide you.

So that was Pam's counsel in the hour of death! Thinking, even with finger on trigger, of his race—of the moral and physical emendation of the stock from which he sprang! Nothing very insane about *such* meditations, thought Punch; but then he very well knew that his cousin had not been insane. Though what had constituted the breaking point, what had driven him at the last to end his long weariness, remained a mystery. Only, in that final hour Pam had trusted and believed in him! That was a grace for which Punch Heseltine was to remain grateful his whole life—with a thankfulness to God that such trust had never been betrayed.

He went to Minto Lodge next day; but not before talking to Bruce Kelly and making wonderful plans for an immediate wedding and departure for England; and not before he had drunk again of dew and honey in the garden of heart's desire. It was with Peril's kisses warm on his lips that he stood before Doria.

Her reception of him was colder than the eternal snows. For of course she knew of his arrival the night before, and it infuriated her that he had not come straight to her. But though she meant for a while to keep that pose to punish him, there was guile in it too. She withdrew herself to icy distances, but her ice was for melting at the breath of passion. She was distant only to make nearness more certain; wayward only to be won; and so certain of him that she believed she could play the ice maiden for her own amusement before she showed him the glint of the fires that consumed her.

Strangely enough, to his now cleared vision there was something about her, with her blue eyes and snowy draperies, that made him think of *Natura Maligna*, that beautiful spirit of the ice whom simple mountaineers believe in, one who haunts the cold blue caverns of the glacier, flickers alluringly above the treacherous pass and launches the avalanche for the destruction of men. And while he so thought, she in turn, subtly sensing something unfavorable to herself, was considering:

"Strange men, the Heseltines! It may be that he feels the shadow of Pam between us . . . the coldness of a dead hand! I must go softly, delicately, not to outrage that fantastic loyalty of his . . ."

Meanwhile they discussed those things which had necessarily to be discussed, everyday matters, such as the lease of Minto Lodge, one or two other obligations Pam had entered into since coming to Rhodesia, and which she desired Punch to look into. Important affairs, such as

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those connected with his income, the dead man had left in perfect order, and her position was simplified by the fact that they had some years before made "mutual" wills in each other's favor. Possession of his few hundreds a year would then come to her automatically on her return to England, where the will remained.

The mode of her return, too, was touched upon, and the arrangements for transporting poor Pam to Scawnsbane gone into. Nor did she shirk reference to the manner of her husband's death. She hated the subject, indeed, and even her callous soul shrank from the lies she felt it necessary to tell. But an urgency to appear pitiful and blameless in the eyes of Punch was upon her, for now that the way lay open before them she suddenly feared that he might remember against her those unspoken invitations to treachery; the calls of her eyes and hands and lips which he had resisted, and won her in resisting. So, excusing herself, she traduced the dead.

"He never cared for me . . . I have known it for years, though no one has ever heard it from my lips until today. You don't know what my life has been, Punch . . . the faithlessness I have had to endure—and ignore . . . for the sake of the family name!" That ought to have its appeal, she thought. "You don't know what my longing has been for a real love. Someone who could offer me all that I too have to give . . ."

But he sat there rock-like, looking at her with strange eyes. Could it possibly be that he was untouched by this story of her wretchedness? She must try a different line.

"But I realize now that he was not entirely responsible . . . Poor Pam! And I can only be thankful that in my unhappiness I was not driven too far . . . That when the one great love came into my life . . . there was nothing and is nothing he could have reproached us"—hastily she corrected herself—"me, for."

Still that stone-like stare in the Heseltine eyes . . . and was that a flicker in them such as she had often surprised in the eyes of her husband—a flicker of irony? Not possible . . . never, never! She went blindly forward.

"At the last I think he realized . . . all that I had suffered. For he left a strange letter to me . . . asking my forgiveness (God knows, poor boy, he has it!) and seeming to wish for my future happiness." A daring inspiration came to her: What of a tender phrase in that letter, legacying her to Punch? "He even suggested," she faltered, "the form that happiness might take."

"You did not produce that letter at the inquest, to refute the theory that he was insane?"

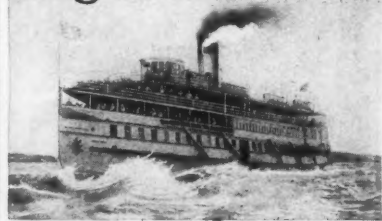
Doria looked profoundly shocked; as indeed she was by the grimness of his voice.

"It was a sacredly private letter—written almost in the hour of his death. I destroyed it."

"Ah! He wrote me a letter too, in the hour of his death." She shot up from her chair, and Punch stopped, arrested by the panic of her eyes, the draining of blood from cheek and lip so that the paint flared out in bold relief; then he said slowly: "I did not destroy it."

"But—how did you get . . ." Her hand pressed hard against the laces of her bosom, her breath came short. "Who

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could have . . ." With an effort she regained her composure and declared firmly: "It must be a forgery."

"Why should it be a forgery? Why, if at the hour of his death Pam thought of me too, of my happiness—gave me wise counsel? Why should that be a forgery?"

"I . . . I don't know . . ." she murmured faintly, and sank down again, her eyes wavering before the keenness of his. "Only that I did not know about it—cannot think when he wrote . . . May I see it, Punch?"

"No. It is as sacredly private—as yours was."

She blenched again, leaning back, putting a handkerchief to her lips to cover their trembling. What did he know? What had Pam written? Oh—something had gone desperately askew with this meeting that should have ended in triumphant wonder! Why did fear creep like a snake round her heart? What was this terrible conviction growing in her that Punch *knew*? What was the meaning of the cold probing glance of his? She could not bear it. Something in the strong quiet of his eyes shook her. The specter of doubt that assailed her grew and grew, until it seemed to fill all the room, and she could stand the suspense no longer.

"Punch!" she cried, and by a supreme effort threw into her voice all the spells of which she was mistress. But he sat unmoved, holding her with that dispassionate gaze, drying on her lips the wild words that sprang to them. Hypnotized, she began instead to murmur incoherent things about leaving the country, reiterating her plans; but in the middle of a sentence the passion that had brought her to the slaying of a man's soul and body unleashed itself again:

"Punch! You must come home, too. You can't stay on out here, whilst I—"

"I am going home." The quiet, the evenness of his tone chilled her. "The old man has cabled asking me to come to Scawnsbane. Says he wants to see me there before he dies."

"Oh—I am so glad!" Hope quivered in her again; joy lifted up its head. "Punch—if we could take the same boat—go by the East Coast!" The sensuous languor of her soul flowed from her lips in a voice like liquid silver. "Stay awhile in Egypt . . ."

"I'm afraid that is out of the question, Doria." He chose his words courteously but with deliberation, for there must be no further ambiguity. "I have already agreed to sail . . . with my wife . . . from the Cape."

It seemed to her afterwards when she was alone that years had passed, a nightmare of darkness, immeasurable distances through which she had heard his voice, calm, *cousinly*, giving grave details of his approaching marriage with Peril Kelly . . . *that girl!*

At last she arose and from sheer force of habit faltered across the room to a mirror on the wall. A conviction filled her that in the last hour her face had changed; and she was right. The face that stared back at her showed like a crumbled ruin behind its veil of paint; base passion and ignoble defeat had stamped it indelibly; never again might it stir the hearts of men, not repudiate its forty-eight years of existence.

THE END

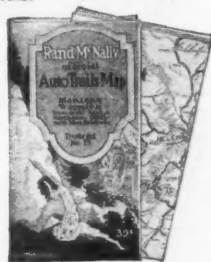


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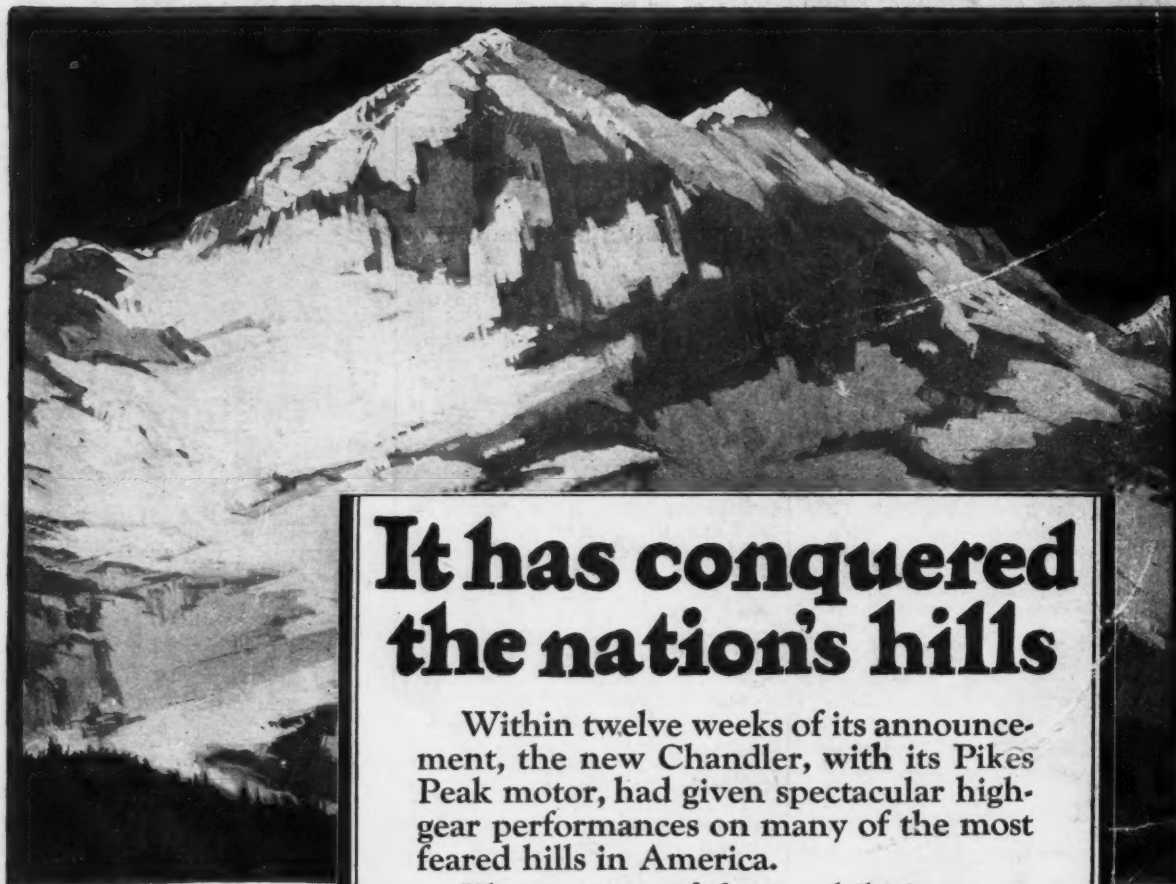
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